cals that sounds like a punk band stuck in a molasses spill. DRUNKS WITH GUNS cover "Wonderful Subdivion" features Engstrom's piercing, Albini-adjacent vocals piercing the sludge with diatribes that twist the original into something even heavier, ending with a five-minute collage of feedback and chaotic crowd riot audio. "Aural" grinds over an industrial-leaning "heave-ho" rhythm evocative of early SWANS, and the band's cover of BLACK FLAG's "Damaged I" turns the classic inside out, leaving all the guts on the floor. Basically, if you are into any of the bands mentioned or you can handle the outer limits of nihilistic noise punk, you'll dig this.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Reptilian

POWERTAKEOFF / SQUELCH CHAMBER – split cassette

Split release by North Carolina's POWERTAKEOFF and Pennsylvania's SQUELCH CHAMBER. POWERTAKEOFF's side is rather ambient; long feedback sound with some sort of inaudible sample of someone rambling about something. SQUELCH CHAMBER is proper noisecore (not in the CONFUSE/GAI kind of way, but more so the grindcore side of it), so noisy to where it crosses over into noise music territory. A release that brings out the weirdo side of the genre.

Reviewer: Daiki Kusuhara
Label: The Butcher Shed

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL REVIEWS #496

SEPTEMBER 2024

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• 999 • ABYECTA • AIHOTZ • ALIEN NOSEJOB • AMBIENT NOISE • ASHLEXI • ASSISTERT SJØLMORD • BATTERY MARCH • BEASTII • BED MAKER • BIG FUCKIN SKULL • BLISTER–HEAD • BLOODSTAINS • BREZEL UND ANTON • CANDY APPLE • CHALK • CHELSEA • CINNAMON • CONFLICT RESOLUTION • CORKER • CRAN • CRY BABY KILLER • CUTRE • DEAD ENDS • DEAD HERO • DEATH BY STEAMSHIP • DEPROGRAMMER CULT • DIRT SUCKER • DISCIPLINA LIMITAR • DIURETIC • DOGS • DOLDREY • DOMMER • DRIVEL • EASTIE RO!S • EXCESS BLOOD • FATAL STATE • FAUCHEUSE • FAZED • FREAK ACTIVITY • FULMINE • GEE TEE • GEN GAP • THE DROLLS • GENTLEMEN ROGUES • GEORGE CRUSTANZA • GOBLIN DAYCARE • GOLDEN SHITTERS • GYLT • H8 MILE • HAMMER AND THE TOOLS • HÄXORNA • HELLSCAPE • HEVER • HORSEMEN • JORO PATH • JUVENTUD PODRIDA • K.O. QUEEN • KILLER KIN • KILLSEDUCTION • KNIFVEN • KNIVES • L.A. DRUGZ • LEJONEN • LIQUID LUNCH • LITIGE • LOS RITMOS SALVAJES • MAD PARADE • MALA VISTA • MANIC SPLITS • MANTAROCHEN • MECHANIZM • MÈNAGE DÈTROIT • MOON PEOPLE • MORAL END • N.E.O.N. • NERVERNA • THE COVIDS • NESTTER DONUTS • NEUF VOLTS • NO FUTURE • NONTOXIC • NYX NEGATIV • NÃO • OLD CITY • OLEXI • PERSONAL DAMAGE • PHANE • PHYSIQUE • PLANET ON A CHAIN • PLEASANTS • POISON IDEA • POWERTAKEOFF • PSYOP • PUNCTURE • PUNKY TUNES • PURE INTENTION • PYREX • RADAR • RAYA • REBELIANT • RETICENT • RIDER/HORSE • SAD EYED BEATNIKS • SALEM WOLVES • CONTRACTIONS • SAVAK • SHITBOTS • SIMP • SINISTER FEELING • SISSY SPACEK • SMOKERS • SMOOTH BRAIN • PRISON AFFAIR • SNOOPER • SPUTA • SQUELCH CHAMBER • STANDARD ISSUE • STREET PANTHER • FIRST IN LINE • GASP • STATUES • SWEET TEETH • TAKE IT IN BLOOD • TEPPEBOMBE • TERMINAL • THE BUDGET BOOZERS • THE CARNIVAL • THE DARK • THE KLINGONS • THE MYSTERY DATES • THE PIST • THE SHEAVES • THE SIDE EYES • THE UNCOUTH • THE WARD • THOUGHT CONTROL • TICS • TOTAL HELL • DISTURD • ULCER • JALANG • UNSANITARY NAPKIN • V/A • WE MARCH • WORKERS COMP • YELLOW RAIN •

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

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This issue contains 140 reviews, contributed by:

Bill Chamberlain
Bobby Cole
Seth McBurney
Luke Henley
Jason Harding
Nick Odorizzi
Ben Marshall
Fiona Rae
Emma Miller
Gonza Perez
D. Gregory
Daiki Kusuhara
Jeff Cost
Eric Anderson
Tim Janchar
Johnny Leach
Biff Bifaro
João Seixas
Dov Malzberg
Willis Schenk
Matt Casteel
Romain Basset
Jake Joyce
Neal Ray
Kenny Kaos
Alex Howell
Erika Elizabeth
Erick Bradshaw

THE COUNTERFORCE

This zine digest was compiled and laid out by The Counterforce.

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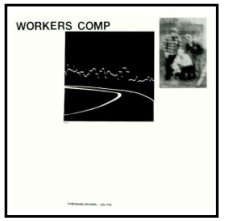
Print It Yourself.

WE MARCH – The Dirty Curty Selections LP

Athens, Ohio's WE MARCH existed for most of the 2000s, and, during that time, they were one of the most ferocious and exciting bands in America. Not that anyone really gave a fuck, including the band. They knew they were great, but they also reveled in self-sabotage. Sometimes these impulses go hand in hand. But to those who saw them tear up a room, it was hard to shake the fact that you'd seen something meteoric blazing across the sky. They played their rotten little hearts out as singer Zaxon Campus hung from the rafters and bled all over the place. If you were smart, you grabbed one of their self-released CDs, three full-lengths in all. But outside of a pair of 7"s, there wasn't much WE MARCH wax. WE MARCH didn't have cool punk labels swooping in to bottle up their desperate punk—pitched perfectly between rural and urban mayhem—for the wider world to get a handle on. A lot of bands go to sleep at night wishing that they could sound like a cross between the STOOGES and NEGATIVE APPROACH, but WE MARCH is the only one who woke up transformed into a take-no-prisoners groove machine (barring EASY ACTION, of course). Hell, WE MARCH even turns WEIRD AL's DEVO-inspired "Dare to Be Stupid" into a PAGANS-style romp, completing a rare Ohio triple play. By their final album, 2007's *Creator/Destroyer*, WE MARCH was still pumping out POISON IDEA-style ragers, but they were also writing songs like "Ethnic Electric," which starts out like a SUN CITY GIRLS jam before unleashing the full force of the band, and "Soul of the Desert," an imposing, monolithic cut like the kind DESTRUCTION UNIT would start delving into a few years later. All of these tracks and more are on *The Dirty Curty Selections*. So who was Dirty Curty? He was band founder (along with singer Zach Fuller) and guitarist Curtis Frey, and he passed away shortly before this long-overdue, well-deserved collection came out. RIP, motherfucker.

Reviewer: Erick Bradshaw
Label: Good Times Rock N Roll Club

WORKERS COMP – Workers Comp LP



I can't tell you how many times I've put on an Ever/Never release and incredulously sat through the first few songs, thinking something along the lines of "what the hell is this shit?," only to come around by the end of the record, swearing it's the best thing I've ever heard. You'd think I would have learned to trust them at this point, but as I put on this album, my first thought was "Jesus—is this a fucking country record!?" And, yeah, it kind of is, but also kind of not really. In any event, it's maybe one of the best things I've ever heard. WORKERS COMP is a trio out of Baltimore/Detroit featuring folks from STAFFERS, DIVORCE HORSE, and DEADBEAT BEAT. They've been at it for a couple of years now, releasing a handful of cassettes/EPs of anything-goes singer/songwriter-driven indie rock (in the sense of independent rock'n'roll, rather than what tends to count as indie rock these days), and this release compiles thirteen of those earlier songs on LP. Tracks cover anything from ramshackle, LOU REED-esque balladeering, to punkish slacker rock, to sneering jangle pop, to folksy Americana (at times sounding not unlike the BAND). It's all over the place! But sharp songwriting and a rough-and-ready approach to recording really ties everything together nicely. It reminds me a lot of what I've loved about stuff by DAN MELCHIOR, KNEELING IN PISS, or even labelmate RICHARD PAPIERCUTS. Quite a collection of songs that I absolutely can't stop listening to!

Reviewer: Alex Howell
Label: ever/never

YELLOW RAIN – Generation Dead LP

It was just okay. The same way that eating white bread on its own is okay. It's fine, but it's nothing that'll knock your socks off by just how good it is. It feels too familiar. Nothing about their sound feels original or like they're doing anything fresh with it. At best, they sound like Keith Morris and Fat Mike drunkenly fucked to create an even more drunk hybrid of themselves so that child would go on to front a punk band. It's not that bad. There were some lyrics I enjoyed, like on "Can't Touch Me," but to name the first song off your LP "Lower Than Shit"? That kind of made me side-eye the already hideous LP cover while listening to it. Not a horrible LP, just kind of bland overall.

Reviewer: Neal Ray
Label: Let's Pretend

POWERTAKEOFF – Cacophony 12"

Slow-motion reverse hardcore from North Carolina that mixes the crush of early EARTH with the spirit of classic bummer punk like NO TREND and FLIPPER. Led by Gus Engstrom (formerly of GRIDS) with a revolving cast of musicians, this time Scott Wishart of LATE BLOOMER and guitarist Kathleen Johnson, a beloved Charlotte scene icon who tragically took her life during the recording process. This release takes noise rock to new heights (depths?) with quaking Sunn amps and subterranean guitar tones that are challenging, confrontational, and off-putting in the very best way. Opener "Exorcist III" (originally by the STRANGULATED BEATOFFS, one of three covers on the record) crawls through nearly six minutes of down-tuned droning riffs and repeated vo-

tin metronome drums tapping away. It's all assembled in a way that gives more with each listen.

Reviewer: Johnny Leach
Label: Tomatenplatten

TOTAL HELL – Killed By Evil LP

The debut LP from this kind of supergroup featuring members of SICK THOUGHTS, STATIC STATIC, and others is a jewel that seems like an '80s relic of demonic metal raw punk. Brutal, anthemic, and filled with a crusty aggression only to be found in '80s heavy metal and raw crust punk from the same era (read: D-beat) here. Cursed vibe, cursed drag, plus an excellent string section and riff selection. Favorite tracks: "Demonized," "Nuclear Satanic Warfare," and "Banished to the Tombs" for a specially twisted experience. Putrid minds beware, this is gonna like you.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Total Punk

V/A – Disco Charge 2023 CD

This is a compilation of bands from Japan from 2023. The styles are varied and quite different from song to song, and all of them rock pretty hard. My favorites are ASBESTOS, CRIKEY CREW, DEMIGLACE, COALTAR OF THE DEEPERS, ZTOM MOTOYAMA (who breaks up the load and fast music with some nice pedal steel playing, unorthodox for a pedal steel player but that makes it more interesting), and my absolute favorite on this compilation is GENBAHU ONABIES playing hard-driving punk—I'd buy this for that one song, so I will be on the hunt for more records by them.

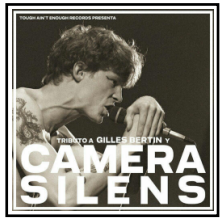
Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Hardcore Kitchen

V/A – Propeller Product Prop 4–1 2xLP

Here's one that I wasn't expecting to see reissued! The Boston (well, Allston)-based label Propeller Product put out a string of unassailable singles for local post-punk bands over the course of two brief years in the early '80s, in addition to a 1981 compilation cassette featuring ten acts in the general Propeller orbit. The problem was that the tapes all had a manufacturing defect that made them impossible to play without an overpowering screeching sound, and rumor had it that the masters went missing soon thereafter—the songs would later circulate informally and in varying degrees of audio quality thanks to the internet, but this vinyl edition is the first time that the entire comp has really been properly presented. It's pretty much wall-to-wall hits: CCCP-TV's two tracks ("Downtown Address" and "Follow It Through") are primo geeky, no wave-adjacent skronk in the COME ON/UJ3RK5 ballpark, and PEOPLE IN STORES stalk smoky, late night back alleys with sax-laced slowburners "Cheap Detective" and "Cat and Mouse." "Something in Your Eyes" and "The Law" from ART YARD go toe-to-toe with Boston heavies MISSION OF BURMA in terms of razor-sharp, anthemic yet dissonant hooks, V;'s "Ich Liebe" is stern, rhythm-driven post-punk that's more Berlin than Boston (a stark contrast with the simmering, SLITS-ish reggae beat of their other track, "In the Suburbs of the City of Pain"), "No Escape" by WILD STARES strangles a guitar Andy Gill-style while simultaneously bashing a xylophone, and their "China Song" snaps from a driving, minimalist beat to a more stilted and angular stop/start. "Let's Be Creative" is the only recorded appearance of CHINESE GIRLFRIENDS, flailing from off-kilter DIY pop (think early K Records) to a collapsing art-punk jumble; the similarly one-off "Midge" from WHITE WOMEN is a breathless rush of seesawing, Rough Trade-ready femme-punk. The NEATS would later devolve into bland college/bar rock in the mid-'80s, but at this point in time, they were crafting great, darkly psychedelic garage nuggets in a Paisley Underground-like fashion, evidenced by the DREAM SYNDICATE-esque "Do the Things" and "Another Broken Dream." Last but not least, DANGEROUS BIRDS' moody "Catholic Boy" echoes *Odyshape*-era RAINCOATS by way of early Kim Gordon-helmed SONIC YOUTH, and the band's keyboardist/guitarist LORI GREEN also contributes three solo cuts of skewed pop that include a totally bizarro cover of GENE PITNEY's '60s tearjerker "Town Without Pity." A crucial document of one of my absolute favorite time/place-centered music scenes—you need this, truly.

Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth
Label: Lawrence Wilmington

V/A – Tributo a Camera Silens LP



Tribute album to the late, great Gilles Bertin and CAMERA SILENS from an assortment of Tough Ain't Enough bands. While none of the participants actively defile the legacy of one of French Oi!'s greats, it did just make me want to go and dust off my copy of *Réalité* more than anything. Go do that instead.

Reviewer: Ben Marshall
Label: Tough Ain't Enough

999 – The Sharpest Cuts Too LP

I wasn't sure what to expect from a compilation album of songs by 999 from the '90s and '00s—I stopped listening to anything new from them somewhere around their fourth album. So wow, was this a surprise. It sounds like the 999 of the first few albums. I'm going to have to go back and listen to the album that put me off from 999. While this doesn't exactly match the quality of the first three albums, it is really good and powerful melodic punk in the style of the first wave of UK punk bands. I really robbed myself of hearing these songs the first time because I wrote them off. Sorry about that, 999. This is definitely better than I expected, and better than most classic punk bands that had output into the '90s and '00s.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Gutterwail

ABYECTA – EPs Collection LP

Fuck yes! ABYECTA from Chile rocks super hard. Part Japanese hardcore, part UK82, part thrash metal, all killer! Blazing, melodic, metallic. And all recorded and written by one woman—an immense display of talent and creativity. This 12" combines two previously released 7" EPs on one slab, both brooding with equal parts intensity and tunefulness. I love this one! Fans of the SEXUAL, the EXECUTE, and the SKEPTIX should get a lot out of this one.

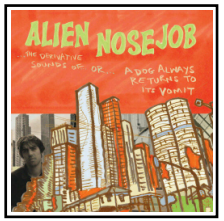
Reviewer: Bobby Cole
Label: Symphony of Destruction

AIHOTZ – Niebla Total 12″

Instrumentally, this release by AIHOTZ sounds a lot like the ADOLESCENTS or AGENT ORANGE. However, vocalist Bea brings a range that is hard to beat and ends up landing somewhere near Eve Libertine and Poly Styrene, but with something almost operatic. The blend between band and vocalist makes this 12″ an enthralling experience. The summation of the parts is something that sounds like anarcho-punk but with a heavy rhythm section ready-made for dancefloor antics or skateboarding background tracks. Definitely check this out if you like punk rock. Absolutely check this out if you're into intriguing vocals.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Discos Enfermos

ALIEN NOSEJOB – The Derivative Sounds of... or... A Dog Always Returns to its Vomit LP



Jake Robertson continues to pivot away from the expected, as one of DIY rock's great shapeshifters under the ALIEN NOSEJOB moniker. While we've heard mutant garage punk and AC/DC worship before, Robertson chooses with this full-length to expand the palette into something a bit more lofty, though no less catchy than previous efforts. This album still maintains a feeling of collage rock, taking disparate elements from the past and reconfiguring them into something singular, with a penchant for the joined jangles of '60s psychedelic pop, Australian garage both then and now, and a faint aura of the New Zealand Dunedin sound. What results is locked in to Robertson's expanding universe, at times evoking another giant of visionary songwriting, Anton Newcombe. But this is no retro homage to anything, and continues to be a project built on confident melodic work and well-structured guitar pop. Anchored by rolling bass lines and driving rhythm, songs like "The Punisher Was Cool" drill their way in with ease and mess about with an undeniable energy while never forgetting to have fun (no self serious erudite rock scholardom on display). I'll be the first to admit that I was never an immediate sell on ALIEN NOSEJOB, and this full-length has driven me to go back to see what I was missing. Turns out it was a backlog like an entire solar system.

Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Anti-Fade / Goner

AMBIENT NOISE – I Was There at the Texas Chainsaw Massacre 12"

Quite possibly the catchiest KBD cut of all time, 1980's "I Was There At The Texas Chainsaw Massacre" by NY weirdo rockers AMBIENT NOISE gets promoted to a big ol' 12" courtesy of trusted historian Harry Howes at Brooklyn's Almost Ready records. A humorous homage to the 1974 cult film, this hokey little earworm of a tune famously features sing-along lyrics that are impossible to remove once embedded in the brain, as well as oddly anthemic guitar soloing, resulting in fun for all ages. After this goofball classic comes three more jams—the B-side from the 7" and two unreleased songs from the same recording sessions. A quirky little ode to artificial insemination, the previously unheard "Test Tube Babies" melds a rudimentary new wave groove with classic rock noodling. Next up is the original flip, the sleepy, CCR-esque "Hostage Hotspot," with its offbeat political commentary accompanied by a requisite shaking tambourine. Finally, the decidedly less jovial "Another Day Gone" most closely re-

sembles an earnest attempt at expression from this short-lived act. It's always cool when records that have become prohibitively costly are supplanted by a more desirable version, and this is an exemplary instance of such. Scoop it up and cross this one off the checklist for good.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Almost Ready

ASHLEXI – For Whatever Your Heart Desires cassette

Experimental noise tape from singer/songwriter OLEXI's ongoing project of releasing an album a month in 2024. February's *Rock N' Roll Paint Job* was a standout release of DIY garage punk, so I was expecting more of the same. Way wrong. This is a collection of blown-out bass grooves, splintered drum machine beats, blackened vocals, and documentary (mostly about weed) vocal samples. It sounds like MAYHEM meets PRURIENT's *Bermuda Drain* era meets a self-destructing mainframe computer. It's not a bad listen if you're okay with noisy electronics puking all over each other, and there is a sonic cohesion that indicates some care was put into the arrangement and sequence of these tracks. This is enough to freak out the norms, but it could be even harsher. Turn the gain all the way to ten and daisy-chain your Death Metal distortion pedals to speaker-shredding insanity next time. Harsh heads don't mind. Still, I appreciate the experimentation and would listen to this again over a generic pop punk release. What's coming next month, OLEXI?

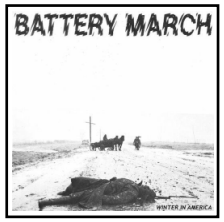
Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: self-released

ASSISTERT SJØLMORD – Klimabombe EP

Their name translates to "assisted suicide" in English, and this is their debut 7″ (and a great one at that). The music is hardcore punk, and I stress the punk park of that description. This is modern hardcore punk of the highest order, no frills and a ton of energy. This band doesn't exactly sound like these bands but they would fit right in with RAT CAGE, SCARECROW, VAASKA, DESTRUCT, and more. If you like those bands, then I think you will like this. It has been a little while since I have really taken notice of a Norwegian band, but this band really brings the punk.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Static Shock

BATTERY MARCH – Winter in America LP



Bilingual Beantown street punk, as indebted as much to Nantes as New England, with a follow-up to their debut 7". Vocals are pleasantly gravel-gruff, clearly been listening to his TEMPLARS tapes, but the plodding chug that underwrites the ambling middle of this album really tests the patience—a song over four minutes? Chill out, RICK WAKEMAN. Ultimately, I cannot be too mad at a record that has this many tunes about how coppers are all a bunch of bad bastards, but it could really do with a kick up the arse to speed up a bit.

Reviewer: Ben Marshall
Label: Insurgence

BEASTII – Follower CD

As the fall season ushers changing leaves, the need for some surf-witch psychedelic tunes rolls in with the breeze. Everything in this album is enchantingly cohesive and they are probably one of the best new dance-punk acts to come out of Chicago; I even considered attending their record release listening party at the Liars Club. The alchemical structure of *Follower* is delightful to hear, mixing wistful lyrics, groovy bass, surf-style guitar riffs, steady drums, and a hypnotic keyboard to create a dangerously great sound. My favorite songs include the enjoyably retro "Butch Beach," get-up-and-twist anthem "Justine," and the deeply surfable "Spilt Milk." Self-tagged as Paisley Underground (which desperately needs a revival), I hear some MAZZY STAR on "Sell Out." BEASTII appreciated many sounds equally among *Follower*, interspersing the album with slow jams, fast flings, and techno beats. If you like the esoteric band aura mixed with surf-style punk music presented in *Follower*, I'd prescribe *Black Tides* by KOLGA as a follow-up drug to cure the obsessive crate-digging sure to be transmitted by this hauntingly good album.

Reviewer: Fiona Rae
Label: self-released

BED MAKER – Bed Maker LP

Without any prior knowledge of the band, my original reaction was "wow, this sounds a lot like the way Ian MacKaye sings," just for me to find out that his sister Amanda MacKaye is the lead. Her vocals though have a touch of the droning of Siouxsie Sioux, mixed with the spoken yowling of Ian MacKaye.

restrial buzz punk of CHROME's "TV as Eyes." But the whole record has this sun-bleached and sandblasted quality, like it was recorded after the band was forced to wander the Sonoran Desert for a week. The vocals, which often sound like someone doing a stuffy-nosed Mark E. Smith impression, are so odd and loosely multi-tracked at times that it makes you feel a little delirious. Real strange, but also real great!

Reviewer: Alex Howell
Label: Dot Dash Sounds / SDZ

THE SIDE EYES – What's Your Problem? LP

The SIDE EYES range from punk to hardcore to a touch of hard rock, all throughout one album. With a range of lyrics of the classic punk "get out of my face" style, to more thought-out lyrics as a comment on society, they give a classic hardcore, head-bopping vibe. Their LP is loaded with a shit-ton of super short, super powerful songs. Specifically, the tracks "False World" and "What's Your Problem?" go so hard, so fast. Without giving you much time to think, they dive into their next track with a new kick to the face.

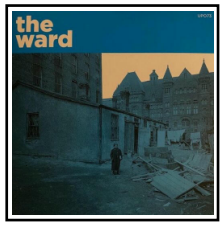
Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: In The Red

THE UNCOUTH – The Uncouth LP

The UNCOUTH are a melodic punk rock band from Kansas City, Missouri that incorporates elements of street punk and rock'n'roll into their songs. The eleven tracks on this album are predominantly mid-tempo, with layered vocals that feature some harmonies, and a few "whoa oh ohhh"-type flourishes. They could be described as anthemic, but that applies more to the attempt than the outcome. I get a strong sense that I've heard these tunes before. The progressions and scales they riff on are worn to the point of fray. That can sometimes be a great thing—like the familiarity of your favorite faded band shirt that is comfortably threadbare. This album is more like the scratchy new shirt that has been manufactured to look old. It's familiar in the generic sense. The anthems just never quite break through for me. I think a useful reference would be ANTI-FLAG. That's a band that left a similar impression…a late-stage iteration of something great cut with, I dunno, baking soda? Look, you can try sniffing Elmer's glue, but what's the point of that?

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Insurgence

THE WARD – The New Dykes / Mike, Mikey, Michael 7″



Two old tracks from a short-lived Toronto group circa 2011 released as a 7". While the songs are over ten years old, they manage to concurrently feel fresh and timeless. These songs would be right at home on a Lookout! Records release from the '90s, or a No Idea release twenty years after that. While having pretty different runtimes (one at less than two minutes and the other at over four minutes, respectively), both tracks are massive sing-alongs filled to the brim with hooks and energy. I'm glad Ugly Pop gave these anthems some new life by rereleasing them, and hope they find a whole bunch of new ears to appreciate.

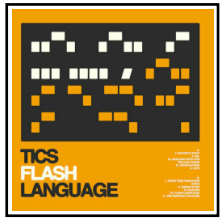
Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Ugly Pop

THOUGHT CONTROL – Sick & Tired of the Talking Heads EP

Hot damn, this EP is lean and fuckin' mean! THOUGHT CONTROL from Jersey (shout out to NJ, all my family is from there) is a wrecking ball of expertly executed, zero-fat hardcore. This thing is chock-full of crunchy guitars, breakneck drumming, and fuzzed-out vocals that are perfectly muddy and distorted. While many would say the crown jewel here is the title track (which does have an amazing guitar intro that sounds like COCKSPARRER's "Riot Squad" on steroids), my favorite track is "Anti Christ Rock 'N' Roll," a fun-as-hell song that has, you guessed it, loads of rock'n'roll guitar work. It goes without saying, this one is highly recommended.

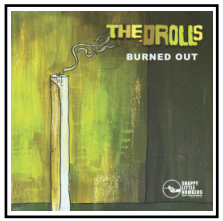
Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Crew Cuts

TICS – Flash Language LP



This is an album brimming with post-punk, disjointed funk, and spoken word with backing harmonies, following the paths of CRISPY AMBULANCE, the FALL etc. I would not consider this LP in an adjacent standing with the majority of records typically reviewed in these parts, but provoking? Yes. Fun and oddly enticing to return to? Yes again. Kolsch bohos TICS at first came off like an aging tribute band, but at second spin, there is a lot more to unpack. Fractured songs that mix dance rhythms with shouted pleas alongside synthetic guitars and

THE DROLLS / GENTLEMEN ROGUES – split EP



Indie/power pop split out on an attractive Snappy Little Numbers 7" disc. A-side is Seattle's DROLLS with an upbeat pair of tunes in the Epitaph realm of good-time indie—BOUNCING SOULS come to mind on the first track "Burned Out," while "Happy Hour" has a MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES arrangement (sans gravelly bravado and horns). The B-side comes from GENTLEMEN ROGUES out of Austin, Texas, who push further into the indie realm, even having the saccharine vocals more associated with 2000s emo in the sense that it's a little whiny, but not exactly sad or melancholic. This music has a place, and I think is gaining popularity with nostalgia-seekers who were teens during the height of this craze—while I fall neatly in this age group, it is admittedly not my bag. If, however, it is yours, please enjoy this sugary little 7"!

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Snappy Little Numbers

THE KLINGONS – 1979 EP

Another day, another short-lived late '70s UK DIY band getting pushed back into the light. This time, it's KLINGONS ("of Hildenborough," as they're now differentiating themselves), who played a total of five shows, recorded four unreleased demo songs in 1979, and completely flamed out in under a year; the half-life of even the most marginal punk obscurities is unreal. The KLINGONS' sound was predictably ramshackle and rudimentary, straddling the increasingly shaky fault line between the three-chord first wave of '77 and the artier, more open-ended approach of turn-of-the-decade post-punk, and clearly indebted to the likes of ALTERNATIVE TV, the PREFECTS, SWELL MAPS, etc. The A-side pairing of "Terminal" and "Cold Love" takes bare-bones DIY amateurism to the extreme, as the drums skitter along in an primitive, unfluctuating thud, the guitar hacks away at halting chords, and the vocals oscillate between monotone rants and and an only slightly more lively quiver—if "Action Time Vision" or "Dresden Style" are Brutalist council estate towers as punk songs, the KLINGONS would be a singular concrete slab. On the B-side, the sparse, seasick rhythm of "Influence" takes things into a DOOR AND THE WINDOW/later DESPERATE BICYCLES-ish direction, with "Manners in Trains" going a bit more trad (relatively speaking), not unlike an ultra-shambolic, way inept WARSAW. That's a lot of names to drop, and the KLINGONS don't even come close to leveling up to any of them, but if you've been thoroughly *Messthetics*-pilled, here's a fresh fix.

Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth
Label: Inflammable Material

THE MYSTERY DATES – Who Are the Mystery Dates? LP

From San Antonio circa 1982, here come (or there went?) the MYSTERY DATES. Overall, for the time, the recordings are really good and seem to capture the energy of the band and how groundbreaking the sound was at the time. At times, it's very hardcore. Other times, it's traditional, melodic punk. And then sprinkled in there, you get power pop and new wave, along with some quirky bits (think B-52'S, CRIME, FLIPPER). Very cool. This isn't just some garbage someone unearthed and decided to put out. This is legit. Eighteen tracks.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Midnight Cruiser

THE PIST – Is Risen LP

Hailing from Connecticut, THE PIST is legendary in certain punk circles. This LP is their first since 1996. Reunion records like this are often a hit-or-miss affair, but this one is really good! Some parts are better than others, but it's overall a super solid slab. The music is still rockin' after all this time and the lyrics actually mean something. Overall, good stuff! Always great to see an older band still making dope music.

Reviewer: Bobby Cole
Label: Profane Existence

THE SHEAVES – A Salve for Institution LP

Parisian label SDZ teams up with the fledgling Brooklyn label Dot Dash Sounds to bring us the second full-length from this five-piece out of Phoenix that shares at least a couple of members with the prolific noise rock outfit SOFT SHOULDER. The LP is composed of eleven two-ish-minute vignettes that can roughly be categorized as DIY post-punk or jangly lo-fi indie rock. You get stuff that sounds like early FALL playing the VELVET UNDERGROUND's "The Gift," SWELL MAPS locking into the loosest krautrock groove, some indistinct blend of GBV/BUILT TO SPILL/SEBADOH, or—as with my favorite track on the record (and one of my favorite tracks of the year), "In Center (X-Static)"—a shit-hot mix of, like, CRIME's "Terminal Boredom" and the extraterrestrial. The majority of the songs are slow-to-mid-tempo with a kind of post-punk and artsy punk vibe. A couple of the songs sort of blended together to me, as they were sonically pretty similar and didn't have a ton of variation. However, "Pan-Pan" had a nice tempo change and I think it's a great song to end the album with.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Dischord

BIG FUCKIN SKULL – Sea EP

I legitimately cannot tell if this is supposed to be a complete joke or not. BIG FUCKIN SKULL from Minneapolis have apparently been putting music out since 2000—I dread to imagine what it would be like to do this dogshit for at least 24 years. Musically, lyrically, and aesthetically, it's MISFITS worship done very poorly. Nothing wrong with a bit of profanity, but there are so many unneeded uses of the work "fuck" that it just gets incredibly annoying. This sounds like a *South Park* parody of a punk band. Now it's obviously not supposed to be completely serious and there's nothing wrong with having fun with it—could you at least make it somewhat enjoyable for the listener though, please? Oh, and the production sucks, too.

Reviewer: Bobby Cole
Label: self-released

BLISTERHEAD – Bad Blood EP

Svenska street punk veterans BLISTERHEAD return with a "rawer direction," which unfortunately does little to disguise the utter naffness of the tunes to begin with. It's about as raw as microwaved salmon for one, sounding devastatingly like GOOD CHARLOTTE in parts, and despite the efforts to make it sound like it was recorded in a dustbin, it just ends up sounding like it needs to be chucked in one. Not for me.

Reviewer: Ben Marshall
Label: Cimex / Laketown / Punkebjartes Punkeplater

BLOODSTAINS – Bloodstains 12″

Orange County punk rockers with exultant So-Cal influence all over them, almost like waves in their vast sea. Flawlessly recorded by Jerry "This Ain't Disco" Adamowicz, the engineer involved in recordings of JFA, US BOMBS, T.S.O.L., F-MINUS, STITCHES, and more, so you know what you are getting here, and it is excellent. Such an embedded sound can't deny ADOLESCENTS, AGENT ORANGE, and the whole spectrum contained in between, with reverbed sounds and steady cadences, fierce palm-mutes and ever-ranting vocals, plus strident guitar sections that evoque pool skating sessions from the early '80s and beyond. Suggested tracks: "Antisocial," "The Last Rites," and "When Men Were Men." Great record, give it a spin.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Drunken Sailor

BREZEL UND ANTON – Spielen Pisse 7″

Here, BREZEL UND ANTON offer two tracks and an answer to a question nobody asked: what would the music in a cheesy, '60s Hollywood haunted house sound like if it were on an alien planet (where the aliens also speak German)? Oh, you have asked yourself that question? Well, you're probably going to be excited about this. I, on the other hand, was asking when I would reach the exit of this martian house of wonders. Perhaps these two tracks would feel more effective if they were way shorter—get in, weird everyone out a bit with quick bursts of off-kilter spaghetti western synth, and get out—but at almost seven-and-a-half minutes, the experiment simply overstays its welcome.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Phantom

CANDY APPLE – Comatose LP

Latest LP by Colorado's CANDY APPLE, reminiscent of Youth Attack releases or TOTAL ABUSE-style hardcore from the late '00s era; somewhere around noise rock meets the faster side of '80s USHC. Chaotic aural destruction with tons of noise, distortion, and feedback to annoy your roommates. For a noisy hardcore release, it does have enough interesting phrasing where it doesn't become too overwhelming, yet it's still cohesive.

Reviewer: Daiki Kusuhara
Label: Convulse

CHALK – Nothingness EP

Debut EP by Chicago's CHALK consists of lo-fi, noisy hardcore that sounds like chalk—not some obscure hardcore punk band from the 1980s in rural Japan, but the physical writing material chalk. Mark McCoy artwork, with mastering by Will Killingsworth.

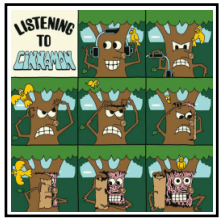
Reviewer: Daiki Kusuhara
Label: Charity Kill

CHELSEA – Radio Active Tapes LP

The UK.'s CHELSEA may be best known as the starting point for a young William Broad (a.k.a. BILLY IDOL, who quit with most of the band to form GENERATION X), and for being contemporaries with bands like the SEX PISTOLS, the DAMNED, and the BUZZCOCKS. But this collection of outtakes and demos from their 1977–1980 period captures the raw energy of a young scene channeled through music that sits somewhere between rock'n'roll and new wave. The playing is solid and frontman Gene October can really sing. By today's standards, this music is more pop than abrasive, and it wouldn't be difficult to find this band's DNA mixed in with a lot of Lookout!-style pop punk from the '90s. Versions of these songs are already in circulation, but this collection has been remastered and it sounds great. They might not be your next favorite band, but there are plenty of worthy tracks here for your next mixtape. Check out the song, "I'm on Fire."

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Gutterwail

CINNAMON – Demo '24 cassette



Hailing from Albany, New York and heavily influenced by the NBHC scene, CINNAMON plays surprisingly accessible powerviolence infused hardcore. Produced by ORCHID's Will Killingsworth in his prolific Dead Air Studios, this tape has got some high-ass quality for a demo; there isn't a blemish to be found. Every element is fully locked in, from the perfectly gravelly vocals to the frenetic drums to the crunchy and thrash-y guitars (especially on opener "Cinntro"). All in all, an impressive first showing—I'd expect to see CINNAMON on some pretty big festival lineups in the not too distant future.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: To Live A Lie

CONFLICT RESOLUTION – Stilborn Year EP

Powerviolence crossover mayhem straight from Arizona that's politically concerned, merging hardcore punk with primarily thrash metal. Reminiscent of DRI and MUNICIPAL WASTE alike, but with a less metallic or satanic approach, putting the focus on politics and the reality of the US and its miseries. Favorite track: "No Control."

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Citizen Resistance

CONTRACTIONS / SAVAK – split 12″

Here's a split one-sided 12" featuring a pair of similar-sounding indie bands from different continents, France's CONTRACTIONS and SAVAK who appear to be from New York. Each band offers up two cuts of inoffensive (if forgettable), melodic radio rock. There are some aspects of this record that to me just scream "vanity project," like putting around ten minutes of music on one side of a 12" slab of wax, and adorning the remaining side with laser-etched art. It seems like a lot of thought and care went into the packaging, which I can't characterize as a bad thing, but feels like window dressing. Not to assert that the music is an afterthought, it's just not as impressive as the presentation. Both groups play mid-tempo, jangly guitar pop with vocalists that sing. CONTRACTIONS have a textured sound with a killer bass tone, are a bit heavier and more atmospheric. There's a shade of the REPLACEMENTS coloring their two songs, which adds some welcome grit to the equation. SAVAK are jammy in a way that I personally find very off-putting but would probably appeal to a much wider audience than the racket I prefer.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Echo Canyon / Peculiar Works

CORKER – Corker CD

A tidy power-punch eight-track EP for this trio from Baton Rouge. The vocals are raw-throated, earnest shouts like Ryan Young from OFF WITH THEIR HEADS singing for HOT WATER MUSIC. The guitar and bass really shine in the instrumental first minute of the song "To the Good Times" before the vocals kick in. The whole thing has the rough and rushed honesty of an unmastered version of ALKALINE TRIO's *Goddamnit*. Two notes: the cover has some cool Picasso-inspired cubist art,

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Terminal Records

THE BUDGET BOOZERS – Love You, Hate You CD

Not to judge a record by its cover, but my hopes were not high after judging this record by its cover. The name, the art, self-describing themselves as "real hippie shit for the real punks," all of it pointed to something I would skip if I came across this album at my local shop. But *Love You, Hate You* by the BUDGET BOOZERS is the reason that saying about judging and covers exists, I suppose. These ten tracks of glammy, bubblegum garage rock caught me by surprise, more so than perhaps any other album this year. This album rips. There is a fantastic variety of sounds to be found here, with each new tune providing something that can only be described as charming to my ears. There are great string sounds sprinkled on some tracks, tracks that rip in and out in a minute and change, reverb-soaked surf guitar, and that's all within the A-side alone. While the album ends not with a bang but a whimper as the last two tracks fail to meet the rest of the album's energy, I will still gladly say I was too quick to judge *Love You, Hate You*, and will come back to this one again and again.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Voodoo Rhythm

THE CARNIVAL – Absoluuttinen Syntymä CD

Yet another band I had never heard about but I am now glad I have: the CARNIVAL from Finland. Discogs tells me they have been going since 1999 and have been very prolific, and yet it doesn't tell me why it took me more than 20 years to listen to them. I guess my Finnish informers are not that good. I really enjoy this latest album *Absoluuttinen Syntymä*, and the fact that the CARNIVAL were able to write such a heavy, energetic, powerful work shows that, twenty years on, the passion is still intact indeed. The music proves to be hard to describe as it is very versatile. The first song has you believing that you'll get a traditional bollocking from a mean and classic Finnish hardcore band that does not take prisoners, which I usually do agree to, but then other songs are doomy, old school FROST-inspired creepy metal, while I can definitely hear a late RUDIMENTARY PENI influence on others (and in the beautiful artwork, clearly). The album conveys a great atmosphere of occult darkness but remains very dynamic, tense, and genuinely rocks. The range of paces and styles is important, but the whole never sounds disconnected or disjointed, it always makes sense. Great deep, pissed vocals in Finnish and a thick, organic production highlight the music's qualities and moodiness. They are difficult to compare to others, but they remind me of both a more atmospheric KERETIK and a more aggressive AKRASIA. A definite win for me that entices to further explore their discography.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Krypta

THE COVIDS / NESTTER DONUTS – Banned From the USA 7″

The story behind this 7" is that the Amsterdam-based band got, well, banned from the USA at the border due to visa issues in 2023. The two members who persisted on wrote and recorded a demo in Savannah Studios which was later re-recorded with the whole band back home. The result is some anthemic punk that's a mix of the swagger of NEW YORK DOLLS and the aggression of U.S. BOMBS.

Reviewer: Tim Janchar
Label: Wap Shoo Wap

THE DARK – Sinking Into Madness LP

This L.A. four-piece, featuring members of bands like TOZCOS, STRANGERS, SADICOS, and PERSONAL DAMAGE, excels when they're playing at full throttle. Their sound is like a collision of deathrock and thrashy '80s metal, with the chugga-chugga guitar and even a handful of solos. Comparisons abound to bands like G.B.H. and Japanese punk/metal acts like G-ZET. The production quality is good, and a delay effect on the vocals adds an extra layer of menace to singer Irvin Kim's wails and snarls. Everything on this album seems deliberate. It's effective, but for me it gets a little monotonous after a few songs. For a taste of what they do best, check out the track "Nightmare."

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Toxic State

STANDARD ISSUE – Living in Leicester / Religion 7″

Under-documented UK femme-punk, rescued from the dustbin of history—the two tracks on this limited (50 copies!) lathe-cut single were recorded at a 1980 show in STANDARD ISSUE's hometown of Leicester, and it's the first time (as far as I can tell) that their music has actually been made available for public consumption outside of the fixed-time, had-to-be-there ephemerality of live gigs in the late '70s and early '80s. True to context, what's on offer here is rickety DIY post-punk by way of some vaguely CRASS-style anarcho sensibilities, with clinging-to-tune guitar, stumbling drum beats, doubled-up vocals from two female singers, and lyrics that simultaneously balance being pointed, political, and poetic ("Who is right? / Fighting to see who's seen the light," as posed in "Religion"); I'm definitely reminded of early HONEY BANE, RUBELLA BALLET, or HAGAR THE WOMB, if less exuberantly danceable and much, much scrappier. Wish we could have gotten some studio recordings out of them, but I'm still glad that STANDARD ISSUE is getting their due now.

Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth
Label: Dying Day

STREET PANTHER – Muscle Rock LP

Naming your band STREET PANTHER and putting out a record called *Muscle Rock* lays out a pretty damn tight rope you gotta walk to pull off; fall one way and it's all too jokey, fall another way and it's all too coke-y. Well, not to worry, because STREET PANTHER nailed that walk with ease. These are self-aware, tongue-in-cheek rock anthems about being an aggro, fist-fighting, street boy, troublemaker heathen (and yes, those all happen to be song titles as well). This record is about the primitive urges rock'n'roll was created to convey to the masses. So drop any pretense, drape yourself in denim, turn it to eleven, and don't forget to always "Flex hard / Keep on flexin'."

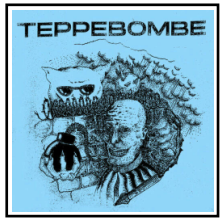
Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Alien Snatch

TAKE IT IN BLOOD – Roadmap of Pain 12″

Now, there is perhaps no subgenre in the entire punk lexicon that tends to prove more hit-or-miss to this particular reviewer than that of heavy hardcore—it's either something I really dig or strongly dislike with very little in between. I am happy to report that Paris-based TAKE IT IN BLOOD falls under the former category. Take notes, tough guys, because this is how it's done. Being from Paris, the KICKBACK comparisons are inescapable, but there's also plenty of NEGLECT and the like. The production, the musicianship, the tunes—they're all spot-on. Basically, I dig it a lot, which is not something I can often say about bands like this!

Reviewer: Bobby Cole
Label: Quality Control HQ

TEPPEBOMBE – Bare Blod EP



Self-proclaimed as "Oslo's most rotten," TEPPEBOMBE is one of the younger hardcore punk bands that I've had my eyes on ever since sharing a stage with them a while back. They tick all the boxes when it comes to playing good hardcore punk: high-energy, gritty sound, raw unapologetic style, rebellious spirit, and a distinct Scandinavian flair. Their "take no prisoners" attitude is the icing on the cake. Taking cues from more modern bands like S.H.I.T. and classics like SVART FRAMTID as well, I would compare them to a band like ASININ in the overall vibe. TEPPEBOMBE knows how to deliver a thrilling listening experience, so go see them live!

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Aeks

TERMINAL – Δεινός Εξευτελιστής EP

Don't be fooled by the cover art, this is a ferocious D-beat album! TERMINAL is a solo effort from Apostol of Kifisia, Greece, and he manages the job well. Since the first demo released in 2018, TERMINAL has been putting out songs that grab you by the collar and shake you awake to the realities of the world. The TOTALITÄR influence is prevalent throughout, but it manages to stay in its own lane. *Δεινός Εξευτελιστής* offers a cathartic outlet for the downtrodden with its unrelenting ferocity and stands as a defiant middle finger to the powers that be.

and this is not the post-punk band CORKER from Cincinnati.

Reviewer: Tim Janchar
Label: self-released

CRAN – Rejet EP

Parisian punkers CRAN return with a three-song EP that straddles surf, Oi!, and post-punk. The band doubles down on the chant/shout/group vocal delivery on each song with a unique blended reverb guitar splashing away behind it. "Rejet" in particular delivers this mechanical repetitiveness that has the obvious METAL URBAIN connotation fused with early KILLING JOKE, a combination mostly pushed out of context with what sounds like Carl FIsher screaming harmonies beneath it all. Hard not to listen to this over a few times, it grows on you, the *esprit* rings out.

Reviewer: Johnny Leach
Label: Une Vie Pour Rien Vinyles

CRY BABY KILLER – Double Black 13 LP

CRY BABY KILLER formed in the '90s and finally offers their first full-length collection of songs with *Double Black 13*. Given the 23 tracks on display here, including "Sunday Best" and "Skull Shaking Boogie" which were previously released as a single back in 1996, one assumes this is a collection of songs rather than a singular album. Either way, this is a long run time that isn't really meant to be ingested all at once. If you pick from the pile, there are for sure some solid sounds to be had, such as "Boystown," which has a nice little NEW YORK DOLLS tinge to it. If rockabilly suits you, there's at least a few tracks that dabble in that sound too, including the aforementioned "Skull Shaking Boogie." Overall, there are some things to like here in smaller doses, but being presented with nearly 70 minutes of music is one thing that should have stayed in the '90s.

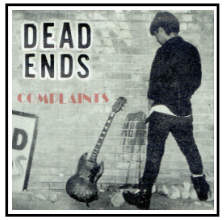
Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: self-released

CUTRE – Yendo a lo Oscuro cassette

Gloomy, frantically pissed and maddening, distorted and blistering classic raw hardcore punk with a grim and raging twist that I personally enjoy very much. Crazy, upset vocals rant about existentialism and social critiques on behalf of their singer Diente. The string section is on-point delivering never-ending riffage, with such a strict grip that makes you pogo instantly—as tight as mayhem-filled hardcore punk can be, while the drums are ever-ranting, speedy and well-executed in the fill sections. Suggested tracks: "Hongo Entero" and "No Comparto." This blasts without doubt, and they are a violent party live; chaos is assured.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Inerme

DEAD ENDS – Complaints LP



This one is a punk relic treasure straight from the Filipino '85 punk rock movement, representing the first LP effort by Pinoy punks during the dictatorship that ended in '86 and now brought back to life by Berlin's Merciless Records. Classic speedy punk rock with traces of sarcasm that remind me of DEAD KENNEDYS and even the sounds of the CLASH's early records, plus a feeling of vitality and anger only found in those critical times. A great surprise from the tunnel of time regarding forms of punk with meaning, and a real treat in the respects of mastering, mixing, and restoration. Favorite track: "Dreamer." Recommended.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Merciless

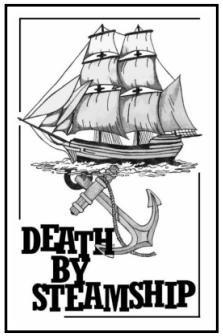
DEAD HERO – 2015—2024 LP

Formed nearly a decade ago in the punk hotbed of Bogotá, Colombia, DEAD HERO is mostly composed of members of SECTA in addition to vocalist Paula Suarez, whose snappy vocals give a refreshing spin to their brand of BLITZ-worship Oi! Collected here are their demos, splits (one with the aforementioned SECTA) and 2017 LP *La Vida Continua*. Opening with a tastefully executed cover of BLITZ's "Solar," DEAD HERO's collected material show a band committed to and proficient in '80s British and French Oi!, proving over and over again that they know how to play catchy and anthemic rippers in the vein of mainstays like COCKNEY REJECTS and the BUSINESS. From the catchy singalong chorus on "Nuestra Vida" to the ringing

guitar intros of "Por Siempre" and "La Vida Continua" to the sparse post-punk of "La Ley," DEAD HERO has the sound down to a science. If you're enjoying the current wave of modern Oi! bands like the CHISEL and MESS, pick this one up.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Discos Enfermos

DEATH BY STEAMSHIP – Death by Steamship cassette



At first glance, I was admittedly a little confused by a cassette where more than half of the songs were recorded live from various shows, with a few demo songs and a single studio track. After a little research, I understand it quite a bit more. First, a bit of backstory for those not in the know. DEATH BY STEAMSHIP was an artsy post-hardcore band from Seattle, WA from 2008–2014, who released a 7" and an LP (both on Whoa! Boat Records). The band broke up with quite a few new songs written but not properly recorded. This cassette compiles what I presume are the only existing recordings of the band's unreleased songs. It also includes a few practice demo recordings, the one studio song the band recorded for a compilation, as well as a pretty fun demo version of "Shot Down" by the SONICS. Think of this release as a companion cassette for the DEATH BY STEAMSHIP discography. Some of the live tracks are a bit difficult to digest as the recording quality is rather rough, but such is the nature of live recordings. As something of a completist when it comes to the music made by bands I care about, I can absolutely understand the appeal of such a cassette. If DEATH BY STEAMSHIP is a band that you love, you'd better act fast as only 25 copies of this cassette were made.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Knuckles on Stun

DEPROGRAMMER CULT – Tactics for Manipulation LP

Hailing from the underground music scene of Boston, this fearless foursome of sonic terrorists craft a harrowing debut. Their music is a relentless barrage of guitars, pummeling drums, and angry vocals that seem to emanate from a place of discontent. DEPROGRAMMER CULT's music is rooted in hardcore but on the noisier side of the spectrum, yet not noisy enough to be called noisecore—more like a less chaotic version of COALESCE or BOTCH. There is a lot of happening beneath the layers of noisy violence; there is always an undercurrent of unbridled energy throwing you curveballs. They seek to unsettle the listener, removing layers of the veneer of normalcy to reveal the harsh realities that lie beneath the surface.

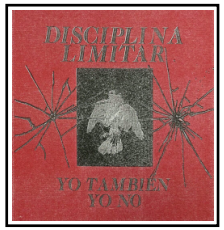
Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Constant Disappointment

DIRT SUCKER – At the Landfill cassette

Following up their 2022 debut 7" release on Convulse Records, DIRT SUCKER from Laramie, Wyoming returns with an eleven-song cassette. Hardcore punk on the cusp of leaning into screamo/powerviolence territory, but also managing to navigate catchy surf guitar parts. DIRT SUCKER is a three-piece with all members sharing vocal duties, each of whom slightly sounds like a different cartoon character. While a lot of the parts kind of blend together, there are certainly some cool aspects within the first nine songs. The tape really ramps up once the instrumental surf track kicks in, drastically changing the vibes for the final two songs. The surf song "Quicksand" and post-punk intro to "Till Death" are the most memorable part of this cassette and are pretty killer.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Painters Tapes

DISCIPLINA LIMITAR – Yo También Yo No LP



A handful of quick and buzzy songs, featuring the oddly light sound of a certain flavor of Spanish punk. Seriously, how do bands like LA URSS and FUTURO TERROR achieve that "distortion cut with clean guitar" sound? It's too gritty for just a boost, but not nearly full-blown distortion. Anyhow, the music here is bouncy, (usually) punk-moderate tempo, just right for pogoing.

Reviewer: Dov Malzberg
Label: Flexidiscos

DISTURD / ULCER – Warfare split CD

This CD is a dream come true. Literally. It is typically the kind of release that I dearly wish for, like an innocent teen unaware that it is actually in the works. Had I been asked, on a casual occasion like when you're waiting in line for the toilet at the pub, which current crust bands would I like to see teaming up, DISTURD and ULCER would have probably come up. I was right to buy that lucky crust amulet off that stinky fellow last year. As he promised before passing out, it always pays off, and Kobe's Hardcore Kitchen

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Doll Pit

SINISTER FEELING – Sinister Feeling LP

SINISTER FEELING is from Baltimore, Maryland and they play powerviolence, which I don't usually listen to very frequently. This album, however, grabbed my attention from the start. It sounds gritty and a bit dirty (no offense meant). I guess I am trying to say that they sound like a veteran band that has been doing this through many long road trips in an old van and sleeping on people's floors for months at a time, and they have distilled the essence of what powerviolence should be and put it into this album in all its glory. I don't usually listen to powerviolence, but this stands on its own despite any type of categorizing.

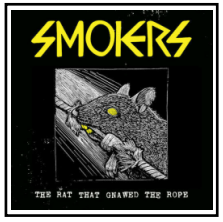
Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Delayed Gratification

SISSY SPACEK – Diaphanous LP

The barrage of noise in the intro serves as a premonition of the intensity to come—emphasis on "intensity." SISSY SPACEK delivers a high-velocity attack of grindcore, solely using bass, drums, and vocals. You don't feel the need to listen to some distorted guitars on top of this, as the drums and bass do a proper job of keeping the songs interesting. A blast-beat-driven fury of classic grindcore acts with the technical precision and sonic density of more modern exponents of the genre. The band has demonstrated a knack for crafting epic grindcore albums (28 songs in 12 minutes) that pack a tremendous punch despite their brevity—the songs rarely extend past the 30-second mark, but manage to feel epic in scope. For fans of extreme, boundary-pushing grindcore acts.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: To Live A Lie

SMOKERS – The Rat That Gnawed the Rope LP



From Oakland, SMOKERS deliver a sort of frenetic, moody, dark punk. It's also got elements of power pop and even a demonic/metal edge to it at times. Still, in the end it remains very much rooted in punk rock. It's self-described, or "tagged," as "detached-garage," one of the funniest things I've heard in a long time. Go check this out.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Mouth Magazine

SMOOTH BRAIN – Demoted EP

Back in the early 2010s, the same troupe of Cleveland scamps behind acts like PERVERTS AGAIN, CRUELSTER, KNOWSO, and the CARP put out a couple of 7"s under the moniker SMOOTH BRAIN. They recorded a third 7" in 2014 that got shelved for whatever reason until it got rescued by Just Because, who are issuing it here for the first time. Compared to the releases from their other projects, this record feels downright conventional. It's five quick tracks of downstroke punk that mixes mutant pop and dum-dum slop, occupying some territory halfway between the HEX DISPENSERS and the SPITS. Honestly, it sounds like something that might come out on Dirtnap. Of course, these dudes can't avoid getting their weird-ass Cuyahoga stink all over things, so even if you couldn't guess the specific players here, it's not like you'd mistake them for anybody normal. It's maybe not the most memorable thing these guys have put out, but nevertheless, it's a cool piece of history for one of the era's most interesting (and best) collectives. Plus, it rips!

Reviewer: Alex Howell
Label: Just Because

SPUTA – Consume & Be Consumed LP

I'll be honest, folks. I initially played through the first song at the wrong speed and liked it a lot more than I did when I bumped it up to the correct 45 RPM. Still a decent outing here, though. Hardcore punk with a little hint of thrash, grind, and slam. The singer is the real standout player here—brutal screams carry each of the songs. Seriously great vocals that alone merit a spin of this slab. Also well worth checking out if you're into this type of crossover.

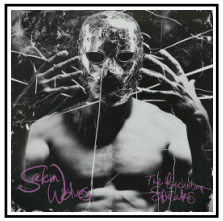
Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Abnegat

SAD EYED BEATNIKS – Ten Brocades LP

I happened to put this record on for the first time on a Sunday morning, which worked out well as this is perfect Sunday morning music. *Ten Brocades* by SAD EYED BEATNIKS is a fantastic bunching of easygoing, slightly whimsical pop psych tunes that could only come out of the San Francisco area. These sunny, lo-fi tunes call to mind the past sounds of WHITE FENCE or the mellower side of the Elephant 6 collective, while also sitting perfectly side by side with a more contemporary reference in APRIL MAGAZINE (was not surprised to find there is some member overlap there). This may be a collection of songs written over the last couple years, but it still feels very cohesive in its flow with songs calmly washing over the listener from start to finish. Press play right when you wake up, and by the time you get to "Passing Melody," you'll be ready for its slightly more VELVET UNDERGROUND "I'm Waiting for My Man" street gallop. Great stuff.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Meritorio

SALEM WOLVES – The Psychotron Speaks cassette



Listen, I need to start off this review by saying that I am extremely impressed with the production and general care SALEM WOLVES put into this concept album, telling the story of a downtrodden pro wrestler who utilizes a magical device called The Psychotron to make all of his wildest dreams come true, ultimately leading to his own self-destruction (I think). It's like *Lord of the Rings*, except instead of the Ring, it's a Psychotron…whatever that may be. The band took it a step further and created a zine and trading cards that pair with this cassette to bring the story to levels that I can only describe as world-building. Musically, it sounds like if BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN was signed to Drive-Thru Records during their darker period in the late 2000s. As a fellow fan of pro wrestling, I was more than excited to dive into this release, and I would again like to reiterate that SALEM WOLVES have completed something that very few underground bands even dare to begin, let alone finish. But in the end, this release is slightly boring at best and, at worst, a slog to finish. It all feels flat, and nothing really ever kicks into second gear. The musicians are all clearly very talented, but I've listened to this album a handful of times now and nothing has grabbed me or left a lasting impression. There's very little catchiness here, and while I understand that the storytelling is the most important part, you gotta give me a reason to want to come back. This may play well for those who value pageantry and theatrics in their music over anything else, and if that's your thing, then I suggest you give this a listen.

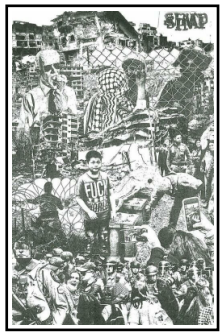
Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: self-released

SHITBOTS – Live at the Butt Can cassette

SHITBOTS from Winnipeg, Manitoba seem to have been putting out records since 2017, and after familiarizing myself a bit with their studio-recorded output, I am absolutely floored by how much more I like this live cassette. Let's first dive into the "live" claim. It certainly sounds as if it was recorded live, but the crowd sounds between the songs are pretty clearly the band hooting and hollering at themselves until the next song begins. It all actually comes off incredibly entertaining. While I am sure that the previous albums released by this band are fine on their own, the eight songs on this cassette are debatably the way a band of this style should be heard. Super driving and stomping garage punk in a *Back From the Grave*-worship kinda way. Dementedly lo-fi recording, making any sloppiness sound endearing and intentional. I am a big fan, and if there is ever any vacancy at this Butt Can that the band members all seemingly live at, sign me up on that lease.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: River Trash

SIMP – Sordid Imprecations Meant for Posterity cassette



"If TED NUGENT had a child who disowned him" has got to be the best band bio I've seen in a while. Hailing from the urban sprawl of Washington, this duo-turned-trio of sonic provocateurs has made a name for themselves by blending the visceral energy of old school hardcore with a modern, stompy edge. Eight songs in nine minutes, so you know it is going to be a fest of fast hardcore songs that I would put in the same bag as some of the younger Youth Attack bands. SIMP confronts issues of social injustice, systemic oppression, and the struggles of marginalized communities head-on. Whether you're a longtime devotee of bands like VOID or seeking to experience the more pit-oriented energy of modern hardcore bands, SIMP has what you need.

got the job done with this *Warfare* split. This album delivers what it is supposed to do and more in great fashion. DISTURD has grown into this quietly cult and iconic Japanese crust band, survivors of what I would describe as the "Crust War spirit" of the '90's and '00s. They have been going for ages and always epitomized the notion of crust referentiality, meaning that their music and aesthetics heavily and openly rely on and crave to emulate very specific bands. In DISTURD's case, it's an undying love for ANTISECT and SDS, whose style of crunchy, heavy, dark metallic punk they nail perfectly. However, *Warfare* also introduces a different side of the band, as the first two songs are significantly slower, closer to the apocalyptic, atmospheric groove of early AXEGRINDER or MISERY. The vibe is moodier too, and the bleak instrumental intro and outro convey a sense of storytelling and narrativity that fits this old school crust style perfectly. Looking forward to more from this lot. ULCER plays in a similar category, but the band never treads in the fast and furious department, rather focusing on writing mid-paced, filthy metallic crust with a doom metal influence in some of the guitar leads. I like how raw, aggressive, and primitive the band sounds (again, classic UK bands like AXEGRINDER or ANTISECT are relevant points of comparison), and I definitely get a big COITUS influence here, even if this approach is particular to Japanese crust like AXEWIELD (who had two future members of ULCER) or REVOLT demonstrated in the past. One of the strongest crust records of 2023, and a personal favourite. Now where is that ALEMENT/SWORDWIELDER split I have been also wishing for in my dreams?

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Hardcore Kitchen

DIURETIC – Zero Days Without Incident EP

It's been a long moment since I've listened to a grindcore album and simultaneously enjoyed the riffs while giggling at the jokes. Enter DIURETIC, a four-piece from Philadelphia. With all the ways grindcore is stretched to fit these days, it's really refreshing to hear a band that sounds like old school, straight-up, no-holds grindcore. NAPALM DEATH and UNSEEN TERROR-inspired guitar with speed-shifting rhythm and blasts that race through your aural canal straight to your brain. DIURETIC chose to write this ten-song EP with the theme of "workplace accidents" as the inspiration. Song titles like "OSHA Supersoldier," "Forklift Certified Early Retirement," and "The HR Rep is Dead" deepen the joke behind the album title. A really fun listen and definitely something I want to catch live.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Strange Mono

DOGS – The Legendary Lovers Demos LP

Presenting the uncut splendor of the demo sessions from their 1983 *Legendary Lovers* LP, this revelatory release strips the polish of the Rouen-based band's fourth full-length album to put the DOGS raw and groovy aura on display in all its natural glory. The band was a class act with a clean and powerful sound firmly rooted in '50s and '60s rock'n'roll cool, but played in a way that never allowed it to come across as a hokey homage. This isn't just a demo version of the album as it was released; instead, it achieves its own identity with a slightly different track listing presented in an entirely different order. Gone is the cover of Gene Vincent's "Bird Doggin'" that originally made the final cut, and instead we get a previously unreleased title track for the album; a haunting ballad that effectively changes the mood of the record. Standout smoky jumper "Never Come Back" is also omitted, and instead we get the lovesick "I Just Can't Get You Off My Mind." Whereas the official release shines with power pop pizzazz, this version offers a sweeter, more intimate feel that stays squarely within the garage, and fans of these French legends will enjoy the contrast.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Reminder

DOLDREY – Only Death is Eternal 12″

Metalheads and punks have always overlapped, and a lot of the best contemporary hardcore and metal borrows from the other genre. Singapore's DOLDREY showcases the stunning effect that marriage can be on their latest EP. This is, by all intents and purposes, straight up crushing death metal with some thrash flair. But the attitude behind it and the production gives it a crusty speedpunk sheen that makes it irresistible. This handful of tracks are performed beautifully and recorded with serious heft. The vocals are brutal as you like, and of course the band's got riffs for eons. Dialed in, ferocious, and fun as hell.

Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Pulverised

DOMMER – Cemetery Bread / Unless We're Friends 7″

Brooklyn's DOMMER out with their debut release of two indie/art-punk tracks. Not much on the Bandcamp page for info, but they appear to be a duo, playing a fairly clean and sparse sound, especially on the A-side's "Cemetery Bread" that features whimsied synth lines, angular guitar, and a mid-tempo, slappy drum beat; lyrics croon/whine "And the cemetery / Smells like bread"—the context of which may be buried somewhere in the rest of the song. B-side's "Unless We're Friends" hits a little harder, with all the aforementioned instrumentation driving faster, softcore moans still intact. I'd need to hear more to decide if I like this.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: self-released

DRIVEL – Drivel cassette

DRIVEL, hailing from Washington, DC, describes themselves as "noisy rock shit." That's certainly one way to describe it! It's going for a blasting powerviolence thing, and they certainly do it well. I wouldn't necessarily say that it's anything to write home about, but it's an enjoyable listen for anyone into the more blasty side of punk music.

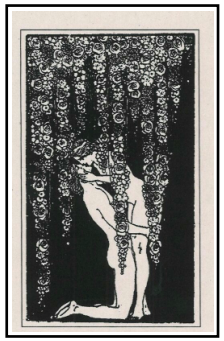
Reviewer: Bobby Cole
Label: Kanak Attack

EASTIE RO!S – Eastie Ro!s LP

From Berlin, EASTIE RO!S do a mature take on classic '77 style. Playing smart and straightforward rock songs sung in German, the band's tight sound teeters on melancholy and flirts with post-punk without ever going all the way. From catchy tunes like "Du in Meiner Hand" to moodier processions like "Jack Beauregard," they do a good job balancing somber undertones with an inherent youthful charm. It's punk for grown-ups that retains plenty of rip and bounce.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Tomatenplatten

EXCESS BLOOD – Excess Blood cassette



EXCESS BLOOD is a deathrock band from the Pacific Northwest. Their self-titled cassette is a five-song romp through various influences of gothic, death-driven punk. The opening song "Here and There" is a mid-tempo pummeler with some excellent instrumental displays and reminds me most of CHRISTIAN DEATH. "Roses Bloom" picks up the pace which continues in the following two songs and has a T.S.O.L. sound that ranges from crooning to hardcore in a flash. The feedback-drenched closing track "To Love is to Grieve" has a sort of CRAMPS-meets-MINISTRY vibe that rocks real fucking hard. Perfect listening for this time of the year.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Impotent Fetus

FATAL STATE – Ni Un Paso Atras cassette

If you're a fan of dual vocals, then you should check out FATAL STATE from Portland. Raging hardcore that ranges from punk-flavored to the more metallic side can be found on their *Ni Un Paso Atras* recording. The opener "Ojo Por Ojo" is a blazing bullet of hardcore punk, while "Preventable Death" is a chance to catch your breath with its slower chugging. Intensely political lyrics are delivered in English and Spanish, but it's the work of two vocalists that really create the collective voice of resistance energy that this cassette has. FATAL STATE seems to draw from a vast range of punk and hardcore inspiration while shaping it into a sound that is distinctly their own.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: self-released

FAUCHEUSE – Rêve Électrique LP

There is so much to say about FAUCHEUSE that it's challenging to find the right place to start. There's just not another band on the planet that sounds anything like them. They synthesize a range of distinct influences and sculpt the raw material into a totally novel form. Scorching käng fretwork mayhem is injected with a tinge of classic rock sensibility, while Emilie's searing and unexpectedly tuneful vocals

RADAR – Radar 12″

Brooklyn garage-y/power pop foursome out with their debut LP. Syrupy female vocals full of hooks over heavy riffing, trading lead lines back and forth between the two guitars—this is driving and fun the whole way through. Featuring members of MELTAWAYS, ADULT MAGIC, GIANT PEACH, and BACK-UP PLAN, to name a few. Catchy, crunchy, full of heart. Awesome!

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Dead Broke

RAYA – Raya cassette

Ultra lo-fi, synth-accompanied garage punk from Madrid. Sounding like a mix of CONEHEADS and CHERRY CHEEKS, the six short tunes here buzz with ear-catching guitar and synth leads. The laidback, sung/spoken vocals maintain the vibe without overpowering it. Standout "Simpatia" has a mysterious hook and a theremin-sounding synth warble that buries deep and refuses to let go, but really, all the tracks flow so well that it's better to just listen to the whole thing and repeat. Enveloped in near-surf levels of reverb and sounding like it was recorded on a boombox down the street from the band, this tape is truly a no-fi affair, but you can't deny the musicianship and energy. If you are on the lookout for bouncy egg-punk, this is about as good as it gets.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Grog / Knuckles on Stun

REBELIANT – 12 Lat Walki Z Wiatrakami LP

This interesting retrospective pulls together 34 tracks from Poland's REBELIANT, a long-running, eclectic hardcore punk outfit. Active from 1989 until the early '00s, the collection features cuts from various cassette releases throughout the '90s, along with some live material and previously unreleased studio captures. Given all of this, the sound quality is surprisingly consistent. The tunes themselves are also quite consistent in terms of quality, which shifts the emphasis on how the band evolved over time. The sound they cultivated is unique, but unashamed of letting their influences shine through. Smash the CLASH, NOMEANSNO, and DEZERTER together, and the results of that alchemy have to resemble REBELIANT. Although they don't sound that much alike, I tend to think of REBELIANT as a spiritual sibling to CITIZEN FISH. Worth a spin for anyone interested in the more experimental side of punk.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Enigmatic

RETICENT – Street Violence EP

I was extremely willing to write this off based on the cover, because do we really need another bunch of fellas pretending to be knights and singing about waging battle under the banner of the king? And yet, on pressing play, I was really pleasantly surprised! Some hard-as-fuck Oi!/UK82 by way of Bandung, Indonesia. Pissed-off vocals, rapid-fire riffs, and a rumbling bass line rounded off by a drummer hitting the skins like they owe him a tenner. Basically listened to this with a massive grin on my face throughout.

Reviewer: Ben Marshall
Label: Lionheart

RIDER/HORSE – Matted LP

Bluesy post-punk that melds gritty, locked-in rhythms with swamp water to create a grimy gem. Slide guitars feature on most songs, sometimes as a graceful chirp like on opener "Combing the Horse," and other times as a haunted spectral warning, like on "Fouled Walls." Churning underneath the slide is a tight bass/drums groove and a boiling no wave guitar squall that foments a distinctive unease. Corey Plump's (of SPRAY PAINT) spoken/sung vocals deliver fractured tributes to frustration, pairing perfectly with the band's sound. Standout track "Bored by the Infinite" features a raw, detuned three-note guitar figure that leads into a group chant vocal. It sounds like wandering into some kind of backwoods secret initiation rite, both spooky and intriguing. Check it out if you like the DRIN or live in a gloomy cabin in the woods where the owls tell you secrets.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: ever/never

sible way. I hope they lean further into the weird without sacrificing the energy. Check out the track "Dare to Live."

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Pokeys

PUNCTURE – Mucky Pup / You Can't Rock and Roll 7″ reissue

General Speech is a shoo-in for 2024's reissue label of the year. Those DEEF LPs, the LEGION OF PARASITES 12", those two DIE ÖWAN collections—just absolutely essential shit! And this reissue of PUNCTURE's 1977 classic, the 7" that kickstarted Small Wonder Records (one of the first independent punk labels in the UK) is quite the cherry to throw on top of all that. For my money, "Mucky Pup" is one of the best (and maybe punkest!) numbers to come out of the UK's second wave. Just an absolute burner of a track, a two-minute ode to being a gross teen from a bunch of gross teens who preferred the DAMNED to the PISTOLS and were too Cockney to be bothered with all the bondage pants and safety pins of their contemporaries, looking instead like they'd been outfitted at the UK's equivalent of Sears. The track's loutish attitude would serve as inspiration for the emerging streetpunk subgenre—in fact, the EXPLOITED covered it on their debut LP—and its unbridled immaturity (including some extremely wild synth racketry) ultimately earned it a spot on one of the *Killed by Death* compilations. It's really great…but you likely already know that. What you're less likely to be familiar with, though, is this B-side. "You Can't Rock and Roll" is less a punk track in the KBD sense and closer to one in the *Nuggets* sense. It sounds like one of the more R&B-influenced beat groups (let's say the YARDBIRDS circa 1964), but it's stripped back to the point of almost qualifying as a skiffle number. But with an attitude straight out of a kitchen sink drama and a yobbo-ass sense of humor, it ends up sounding undoubtedly punk. Fuck—I just love it! What an incredible 7"!

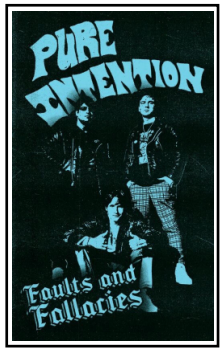
Reviewer: Alex Howell
Label: General Speech

PUNKY TUNES – Still Going Strong CD

If you've ever wondered what it would sound like if the DISTILLERS met KIDZ BOP, this EP is it. *Still Going Strong* by PUNKY TUNES delivers the sound-blasted confection key to pop punk sounds. The band caught on quickly to what makes a good bubbly tune, with electrically charged drums by Matthias on every song and great melodic guitar by Laurent on tracks like "Keep On" and "Still Going Strong." Coming from Sélestat, France, this EP calls back to the country's roots, making the past proud with the politically charged lyrics of "Eco-Anxiety" and "Attitude" calling for a revolution, hailed energetically by vocalist Marie. Though nothing standout or provocative, this is certainly the right EP if you're in the mood for a fun hit of upbeat music.

Reviewer: Fiona Rae
Label: Kanal Hysterik

PURE INTENTION – Faults and Fallacies cassette



Chicago three-piece PURE INTENTION brings a high-energy jolt of punk-infused rock with their tape *Faults and Fallacies*, delivering six tracks that range from one to three minutes while channeling a strong Scando influence. It's a pretty good time, but the tape loses momentum with "Fallacy," which meanders a bit and incorporates George-fucking-W. Bush samples that I found more confusing than effective. Despite this, the tape is a spirited listen that made me feel like it would be hella fun to watch them play while throwing back some beers at a dive bar. The standout track, "No Control," is a pedal-to-the-metal romp with fun gang vocals.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: What's For Breakfast?

PYREX – Bozo EP

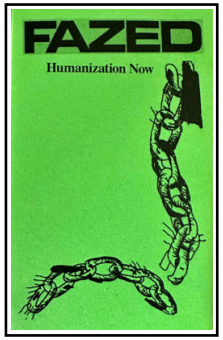
To define this EP in two words, I would say magnificent chaos. Heavy, distorted vocals/screaming overlay the tight fast-core instruments, while maintaining a bit of a spooky vibe. Specifically, the track "Viper" seems like the type of song that would be playing during a chase scene in a horror movie. I feel like this EP would be great to play if you need motivation to do something and want music to get you excited enough to do it. Overall, I would say that much like their band name, PYREX's music is sturdy and timeless.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Under the Gun

catapult their sound into the goddamn stratosphere. Have you heard a D-beat band make use of an organ? On paper, this might not make much sense, but in practice, FAUCHEUSE absolutely shreds. *Rêve Électrique* pulls together five songs from their demo and an additional five brand new ragers to create an incredibly memorable album. If you listen to these ten cuts and aren't immediately sold, it's worth playing through a few more times to let the full scope of FAUCHEUSE's brilliance come into clear relief. A top-tier release, one of my favorites of the year.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Symphony of Destruction

FAZED – Humanization Now cassette



Collecting four previously released songs from these Belgian punks, the music on this cassette reminded me of metal-inflected hardcore from the '80s with its crunchy guitar sound. The songs are fast-paced and engaging, with dynamic intros and tempo shifts that keep things interesting—none of the tracks exceed two minutes. Vocalist Kevin Hellbuyck alternates between singing and sing-talking, reminding me a bit of Shawn Knight from CHILD BITE. The band says, "FAZED as a band favors kindness over cruelty, tolerance over intolerance, altruism over egotism, cooperation over authority, communication over frustration," and those all seem like worthwhile causes to champion. This is good shit. Check out "Go for Broke."

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Society Suckers

FIRST IN LINE / GASP / STATUES / SWEET TEETH – Honor Roll of Hits: A Lövely Four Way Split LP

No pun intended, but this truly is a lovely four-way split right here. A nice meld of several different styles, which leaves the entire album feeling fresh throughout. Things kick off with STATUES, who play a bittersweet, indie-rock-tinged style of punk similar to bands like GASLIGHT ANTHEM and latter-era HÜSKER DÜ. GASP is up next with some hardcore-infused rock'n'roll that brings to mind the more recent outings from bands like FUCKED UP. Really high-energy with musical peaks and valleys that keep things especially groovy. SWEET TEETH have a similar sound to STATUES, but are more akin to DINOSAUR JR. and FARSIDE, satiating the needs of anyone who misses the '90s alternative sound. Closing things ups, ironically enough, is FIRST IN LINE, who play a style of skate punk that I feel like I haven't heard in years. Anti-fascist and catchy as hell. What more could you want? Really great slab and well worth a listen.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Lövely

FREAK ACTIVITY – Cassette Tape 2 cassette

CASSETTE TAPE #2
COME TO ME • SMALLTALK • NOTHIN • THEY • LOTS OF THINGS • OUT OF SIGHT • MATERIAL WORLD • PHYSICAL MAN (DIGITAL LEATHER) • LOST AT SEA
B/W

From the solo bedroom (read: basement) project of Myles Page, the fairly prolific FREAK ACTIVITY drops another cassette. Buzzy guitars greet us on the opener "Come to Me," with simple backbeat drums, distorted vocals, and a generally pop-forward sound, maybe BILLIAM-reaching. While this is true for tracks one through four, five through nine take a different tone, trading a freewheeling irreverence for a melancholic shuffle. The B-side also brings in the synth, which is at times cantankerous ("Lots of Things") and at others catchy disco-poppy ("Material World") like a COBRA MAN song. There's a cover of DIGITAL LEATHER's "Physical Man" as well, which is booming, spacious and doom-filled, leading perfectly into the last track "Lost at Sea," featuring a mesmerizing synth line with lyrics that repeat "I lost my ship along the way;" a sense of loss, despair—insert whichever feeling you like—and is my absolute favorite of the album. From what I can tell previous releases—something like five EPs, a few singles, and an LP—were all self-released digitally or via hand-dubbed tapes or CDs with personalized drawings on each. *Cassette Tape #2* marks the first label release on Painters Tapes, self-described as "Detroit's Worst Cassette Label." So, congrats, and please keep up this enjoyable FREAK ACTIVITY.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Painters Tapes

FULMINE – Randagio EP

This was always going to be a total cracker. A motley crew of alumni from CHUBBY & THE GANG, ARMS RACE, STINGRAY, and the NEW YORK HOUNDS, among many others, combining forces to create a love letter to rough-as-yer-like Italian Oi! The result of a session in London's veritable hit factor Fuzzbrain studios, fuck-all practice, and a shared love of skinhead rock'n'roll, baby, this six-track EP is pure not-from-concentrate, stripped-back, hard-rockin' Oi! There are clear influences from NABAT, KLASSE KRIMINALE, and even a sprinkling of CAMERA SILENS with a faint sax lick for all the Euro skins. Vocals like a cement mixer, bass lines so thick you could spread 'em on

toast, it's the real deal. Plus, the online-only THIN LIZZY cover is pure pint-necking fodder. A real mid-tempo stomper that you need in your life.

Reviewer: Ben Marshall
Label: La Vida Es Un Mus

GEE TEE – Prehistoric Chrome LP

GEE TEE is from Australia and has been around for eight or so years now, and this is a compilation described by the label as "eighteen tracks from both the distant future and the nearly forgotten past." I would describe it as lofi punk/pop that was very popular from around 2006 to 2018. Bands like the OKMONIKS, NOBUNNY, SNEAKY PINKS, HUNX AND HIS PUNX, and others—I can hear some of the same influence as the current Australian bands that are so popular right now. Rocking lo-fi.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Nailbiter

GEN GAP – Hanging Out With Gen Gap EP

This 7" from Philly's GEN GAP has a sort of classic quality to it, where I'd believe you if you told me it came out at any point between 1994 and now. It's hardcore punk with a fun sound that never gets too fancy, conjuring up sufficient power and convincing rage without ever reaching for the metal or getting especially gnarly. Consider it a hot new dish cooked up from an O.G. recipe.

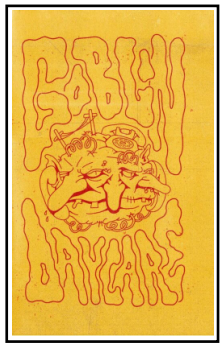
Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: MF

GEORGE CRUSTANZA – George Crustanza cassette

Does anyone remember the '00s band CRUSTINA AGUILERA? They had a hilarious name and played top-shelf snotty anarcho-punk, and since the GEORGE CRUSTANZA moniker immediately reminded me of them, I thought I might be in for a good surprise. I was expecting straightforward, energetic, political, fast hardcore punk, and once again my punk radar was right—I have not been disappointed, to say the least. Despite the pun, GEORGE CRUSTANZA from San Francisco is not a crust band, although they do have some käng influence and are able to pummel the shit out of the casual listener if necessary. The band can switch from a fast primitive hardcore beat to a stomping mid-paced one and then conclude on a D-beat, all in 90 seconds. They are versatile and very much in tune with the modern school DIY hardcore music in that respect. What I appreciate here is that they don't hide behind dozens of pedals and mountains of effects (which I increasingly tend to find rather distracting instead of engaging) in order to accomplish their punk mission. It is direct, unpolished, energy-based, and it works perfectly. I love the female vocals here, angry but still keeping a snotty sense of tune. Overall, a very enjoyable tape.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: self-released

GOBLIN DAYCARE – Agitprop Hotline!!! cassette



Absolutely incredible solo egg-punk project from Istanbul, Turkey. Fast, quirky, driving, and catchy as hell. An entity known only as Mama Goblin is the mastermind behind this project, doing every single aspect of the process. Mama goes heavy on the catchy synth licks and it really works. This is simultaneously wildly catchy and a bit disturbing. Truly everything one could hope to get from an egg-punk solo project. *Agitprop Hotline!!* is the first full-length album by GOBLIN DAYCARE after an EP cassette (*Q: EP? A: EP!!*) and digital releases of singles and remixes, and it truly does not disappoint. Fingers crossed that it isn't too much to hope for to get to see a live band on a US tour at some point.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Painters Tapes

GOLDEN SHITTERS – Love Blows EP

A RAMONES-core trio from the banks of Lake Ontario, GOLDEN SHITTERS play your typical SCREECHING WEASEL-styled pop punk. Fun and catchy stuff, and if you dig these kinds of tunes, GOLDEN SHITTERS will be right up your alley. Otherwise, it's pretty run-of-the-mill bubblegum punk. I bet they're a lot of fun to see live, though.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Ugly Pop

PLANET ON A CHAIN – Culture of Death LP

Oakland acid-to-the-veins hardcore punkers deliver twelve blunt force ragers filled with an exquisite anger and precision in the execution of their ball of sound. Fast-paced, urgent, and cathartic vibes in a racket of harsh, nails-and-glass tracks that come like punch after punch. Breakdowns are good abuse, and specifically flawless in taking speedy cadences and momentum. Solid fire record, and a project that's probably great live.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Revelation

PLEASANTS – Rocanrol in Mono LP

Australia continues to be the number one exporter of fantastic, pure rock n' roll, this time from the remote city of Perth. PLEASANTS play with the typical power pop energy we've grown used to seeing these days, combining elements of RAMONES, DEVO, and MARKED MEN with a little bit of the STONES thrown into the mix. Shit, the singer sounds like a younger Mick Jagger being run through a megaphone. This was recorded to a four-track cassette station which is absolutely amazing to me. This sounds brilliant. Just goes to show you don't need any of them fancy doohickeys to capture the true power of the rock'n'roll spirit! Really great stuff here, well worth a spin.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Under the Gun

POISON IDEA – We Must Burn 2xLP reissue

Capping off the initial 1980–1993 phase of POISON IDEA's long and storied existence, *We Must Burn* was the fifth and final offering from what many consider to be the classic lineup. In partnership with American Leather, TKO has made the album available on vinyl for the first time since its original release in 1993, remastered from the tapes and repackaged in a deluxe gatefold jacket. If that weren't enough, there's an extra LP featuring studio outtakes from the *Religion & Politics* 10", and live tracks from their performance at a gay rights benefit festival that was hosted at the Portland Meadows racetrack in 1992. For my money, the extra material alone makes this worth the price of admission, with some killer covers of DEVO, WIPERS, and G.I.S.M. *We Must Burn* is itself an incredibly interesting album. Opinions will of course be divided on later-era POISON IDEA, but quality and competence is undeniable. It's stylistically scattershot, with savage cuts that harken back to their hardcore roots, tracks that would fit comfortably on *Feel the Darkness*, and some songs that stab out in unexpected territory with blues refrains, some actual singing from Jerry A, and even an attempt at grunge (it was 1993, afterall). That may sound terrible in theory, but in practice it somehow works. I know at least one person for whom this is their favorite POISON IDEA record. Wild. For the completist, this is a no-brainer, and for the curious it's worth a listen at the very least, 'cause let's face it, even at their worst, POISON IDEA was nothing to scoff at…and you know you want to hear their take on alternative rock.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: American Leather / TKO

PRISON AFFAIR / SNOOPER – split EP

If you've never heard of either of these bands, the good news is you have two great discographies to worm through some of the verviest, vibiest bedroom punk put to tape in the last decade. This split exemplifies what each act does at their best—lo-fi hard bops to tickle your brain and move your ass. "On Line" is one of my favorite tracks to date from Nashville's SNOOPER, with its furious pace and a bass line that never ends (until it does, abruptly). Barcelona's PRISON AFFAIR likewise keeps it filthy with overcooked lo-fi gems careening into your innerspace. Squawking, drum-machine-fueled masterpieces like "Algo Huele Mal" put you through your paces and set the tone for two more tracks of bug-eyed manic marvelousness. It's faster than hardcore and catchy as pox. Two of the best at their best, what more do you want?

Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Big Love / Static Shock / Under the Gun

PSYOP – Dare to Live EP

PSYOP's *Dare to Live*, recorded in West Liberty, Iowa in 2022 and released through Iowa City's DIY label Pokeys Recordz, is a blistering, no-frills hardcore attack from the Midwest. This four-piece band puts speed above precision with these eight guitar-driven songs, each never crossing the two-minute mark. While most of these songs would fit right in on an '80s hardcore comp, at times they also veer into noise rock territory, like in "State Violence," which echoes the dissonant weirdness of *Goo*-era SONIC YOUTH. Singer Dolly Sperry (also of BOOTCAMP) sing-talks lyrics tackling topics like war apathy and police brutality, rejecting meat consumption and finding solidarity in an anti-authoritarian tribe. It's raw, urgent, and unpolished in the best pos-

OLD CITY – The Last Thing Left to Harvest LP

Portland, OR's post-crust favorites OLD CITY are out with their second LP. This (mostly) three-piece band has developed a full and driving force of disillusionment—Dan's ferocious, tom-heavy drums play under the leg work of Erik's distorted bass, often acting as both rhythm and bass guitars, next to Nick's guitar leads and downcast vocals that owe as much to Portland predecessors DEAD MOON on tracks like "Illusion of Peace" (with Sara on guest vocals to boot), as they do to mean-spirited D-beat screams on "Not Here, Not On the Other Side." This variety, along with the penultimate "Isolation," a short acoustic guitar-led instrumental, gives the album an undeniable depth, furthered only by the anthemic closer "Wilderness" that despairs with "And when you need a friend / We'll never meet again." Sara performs soaring melodies on this final track; it is beautiful and dark. *The Last Thing Left to Harvest* is not to be missed.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Old City

OLEXI – Voicemails cassette

Oh my god. When I first started listening to this, I couldn't believe it was actually the LP I was reviewing, but here it is. This is bad. This just sounds awful, like it was recorded in somebody's dingy apartment on a flip phone. The vocals are not sung, but spoken in this obnoxious deadpan voice. The voice of the "vocalist" is just bad, and the production is practically non-existent. There's these really thin synth and drum machine sounds that made me really question if this was even a serious music project at all. He's not even rhyming most of the time, and when he does, it makes me grit my teeth. On the song "Miss You," it's him talking as a mother who misses her son and wants him to come home. It just really drives me up a wall, because he talks in this wimpy, feminine voice while that awful synth music plays. Then when it gets to the "I miss you" part, he starts screaming like he's getting his asshole waxed. It's horrendous. It tries to critique punk rockers, and I would be able to get behind that, however I can't help but notice that the music is atrociously bad. I can't recommend this, not even to the most die-hard synth punk fans.

Reviewer: Neal Ray
Label: self-released

PERSONAL DAMAGE – Violent Ritual EP

I've heard this Los Angeles band called "snotty," and I would say that describes them pretty well. Snotty American hardcore. Texas, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Michigan. If you like American hardcore punk, you aren't going to find many bands that can equal this record. They recently toured the US and hopefully they'll be doing it again, so make sure you see them and by all means, buy this record!

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Sorry State

PHANE – Maniac LP

PHANE is from Vancouver, BC, and they are bringing the G.B.H.-style hardcore punk to the turntable. They've got it down, too—the song structure and the great guitar riffs, shouted vocals and powerful drums. If you're a fan of UK82-style hardcore punk with some modern updates, you should rush out and grab this now.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Phobia

PHYSIQUE – Overcome by Pain EP

Six more tracks of ripper crust from the reigning monarchs of crasher chaos, Olympia's PHYSIQUE. You should know what to expect by now—raw, blazing FRAMTID worship from the very best in the game. It obviously rips. They're as fast and as ferocious as ever on this one. It's more D-beating goodness, but it's still as fresh and as exciting as it ever was. A must-listen.

Reviewer: Bobby Cole
Label: Iron Lung

GYLT – I Will Commit a Holy Crime cassette

Feral hardcore fire starters GYLT throw a hard punch to the nose with their newest EP *I Will Commit Holy Crime*. Hard to describe but very easy to listen to, GYLT is equal parts thrash and hardcore (but not in a D.R.I. kind of way). More like a way, way darker version of SACRILEGE and with an eerie atmosphere similar to RIGOROUS INSTITUTION, GYLT is very innovative and has a unique sound. Everything in this EP sounds dark and dirty, and a bit unsettling, with ferocious screams directing negativity towards everyone and everything. GYLT shoots to kill!

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Popular Affliction

H8 MILE – Spread the Love cassette

Never trust a band who names themselves after 8 Mile. I get these guys are from Detroit, but c'mon... I honestly had high hopes for this because of the cover, but no, I was let down. This isn't great. The vocals are annoying and the production is flat. There's also a confusing addition of a keyboard that doesn't really make any sense for their sound, but hey, whatever works, I guess. I just don't understand why the vocalist sounds like he's gargling water and ranting at the top of his lungs at the same time.

Reviewer: Neal Ray
Label: Painters Tapes

HAMMER AND THE TOOLS – Hamma cassette

Seemingly all of greater Mississippi underground punk came together to create this frenzied second HAMMER AND THE TOOLS demo. The band, from Jackson, features members from BIG CLOWN, and it was recorded in the southern punk mecca of Hattiesburg, MS by Hampton (Earth Girls Tapes, JUDY & THE JERKS, BAD ANXIETY, and countless more). Seven songs of kooky, witty, quirky, clangorous hardcore punk that somehow feels both intelligent and incredibly juvenile. Add in a weirdo, manic, indecipherable spoken word noise track and you'll likely find yourself "Contemplating the Tool Box" as well.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Psychic Hand

HELLSCAPE – Cujo EP

HELLSCAPE, out of West Yorkshire in the UK, is a unique band to say the least. Heavy deathrock influences pervade this recording, but there are also hardcore breakdowns and a big helping of anarcho-punk. It's a sound that shouldn't work out, but it does, and it's fucking awesome. Vocalist Ciara is full of fury as caustic lyrics are delivered. Joe on drums and Lily on bass make up the rhythm section and keep perfect time with effortless stops and shifts. Guitarist Ben uses a buzzsaw tone that is absolutely punk rock. From start to finish, this six-track EP is an absolute blast.

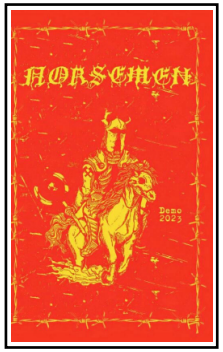
Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Advanced Perspective / Donor

HEVER – Láska, Peniaze, Strach EP

A decent if not slightly patchy collection of songs from Czech quartet HEVER. On their Bandcamp, they cite '80s NYHC and bands like CRO-MAGS and DINOSAUR JR. as influences, which all checks out; the riffs are big and the vocals are near-spoken-word most of the time. HEVER definitely has some chops—they play at breakneck speed, and on songs like "Succubus/Incubus" and the title track "Láska, Peniaze, Strach" ("Love, Money, Fear"), they're at their thrash-y best. Elsewhere they lose me, like the corny backing vocals on "Popol" or the completely out-of-left-field final track "Do Čina," an out-of-place post-punk deathrock cover that feels like an odd way to end the album. Honestly, if they trimmed this down by a few songs and stuck the landing, I'd be far more generous. Not a bad record, but not something I'll be revisiting.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Stoned to Death

HORSEMEN – Demo 2023 cassette



A very cool demo from Blitar's HORSEMEN put out on Indonesian-based Darkroom Records. Four tracks of youth crew-style hardcore that at times remind me of INSTED and CHAIN OF STRENGTH. Check out "Reality;" great riffs, great breakdowns, great vocals. Apparently the hardcore scene in Blitar is thriving right now, and a cursory glance shows there's no shortage of young and angry bands coming together to put on shows and fests—Blitar Hardfest 2024's lineup is a great list of new bands to check out. It's always a pleasure to discover these scenes that I would've missed out on otherwise (thanks, *MRR*).

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Darkroom

HÄXORNA – Häxorna demo cassette

Rip-roaring hardcore punk from Athens, GA, and the debut release on a new tape label also from Athens, Total Recall Recordings. Three-song demo that consists of a total of two minutes and fifty-six seconds worth of music. I listened to the demo in its entirety three times just while attempting to decipher the bramble of a band logo on the tape cover, then again a few more times while I attempted to figure out how to type an "Ä" on a computer because I'm admittedly a bit of a caveman. Fast hardcore with D-beats peppered in for flavor. HÄXORNA bursts through these three songs with pure intensity and aggression, not letting up for a single second. Can they keep that energy up past the three-minute mark? I, for one, look forward to hopefully seeing them live to find out firsthand.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Total Recall

JALANG / UNSANITARY NAPKIN – split LP

Now, this is what I call a judicious split LP, as both bands toured together in Europe during the summer. Sometimes bands sharing records seem to have nothing in common and just look like a mismatched couple sharing the same bed, but there is none of that here: JALANG and UNSANITARY NAPKIN are the perfect couple. Since I very much enjoyed JALANG's absolutely furious LP released a few years ago, I was eager to see what they had been up to, and, well, they haven't gone softer, musically or politically. This Melbourne (or Naarm, as the island's Indigenous people call it) band delivers abrasive käng hardcore with a crust punk edge at times. The band clearly lies on the TOTALITÄR-inspired side of the Scandicore spectrum like INFERNÖH or RAT CAGE (the riffs rock in a catchy way), but the music also displays a sense of anger that I would compare to STATE OF FEAR, and I am also reminded of some of the crusty anarcho-punk bands from the '90s and '00s (I love how raspy and pissed the vocals sound). The lyrics are in English and Indonesian and deal with colonialism and feminism, among other topics. On the other side, UNSANITARY NAPKIN from Wellington (or Te Whanganui-a-Tara) await. Lesser-known than their tag-team partner, their *All Billionaires Are Bastards* album was incredible and an unexpected highlight of 2022 for me, seemingly out of nowhere (well, New Zealand). The band can be said to have a unique take on the otherwise tried and tested fast and angry anarcho-punk recipe. What I particularly enjoy in their music is the atmosphere of uncontrolled, anger-driven dementia. I am reminded of RUDIMENTARY PENI (or indeed, of GODORRHEA) in places, especially with the anguished vocals, the sound of the guitar, and some of the snake-like bass lines. The band would appeal to the modern hardcore crowd in terms of production and songwriting (more polished than on their previous work), but I am personally reminded of raw, fast, and angry '90s anarcho bands like JOBBYKRUST or PINK TURDS IN SPACE, because I like to pretend I'm old school. I miss the mid-paced numbers of their previous work, but it is still very convincing and enjoyable. The band tackles the same subjects as JALANG and even covers one of their songs (the Australians doing the same on their side of the fence). Bellicose, meaningful, and positive hardcore punk here.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Bad Habit

NEUF VOLTS – Ignorance cassette

A HC/classic punk band from France. The cover of the cassette originally drew me in with its classic punk vibe; it has drawings in the style of American Traditional tattoos, including the mythical creature, the Griffin. The fun doesn't stop there, though. Using a combination of both French and English, NEUF VOLTS brings a high-energy sound (yet with no screaming, only loud vocals) that makes you feel like you are seeing them live at a show. The contrast of the higher-pitched yelling creates a delicious contrast to the fuzzy and distorted guitar. If you like any style of punk or hardcore, I would check these guys out.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Dirty Slap

NO FUTURE – Mirror LP

NO FUTURE from Perth has been a band for a while now, honing their music into a raw hardcore/crasher-influenced sound that is full of bass, noise, and rage. If you've never heard of NO FUTURE, no worries. The *Mirror* full-length is a great place to get started, with twelve tracks that are mostly previously released. Between the bass-and-drums overload and the crackling guitar, I'm not really sure which aspect is my favorite, but I will say the vocals are excellent. "Endless Torture" is a standout track for me. This is a split release between Iron Lung and Televised Suicide, so you know this is a well-produced album with all the charm and hallmarks these two labels are known for.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Iron Lung / Televised Suicide

NONTOXIC – Intoxicated LP

Unearthed from East Germany's underground cassette releases of the '80s, the Tapetopia project brings us a set of NONTOXIC tracks based on 1989's Haus der Jurgen Talente show (often stylized HdjT, a youth center in East Berlin). Gleaned from drummer Henning Rabe's write-up on the Tapetopia site (worth reading if this music resonates with you), lead singer Bernd Shulz, who at the time had a blues band with guitarist Danilo Steinert, heard the title track from the the CURE's *The Top* album beaming in from a West Berlin radio station, after which they quickly traded in their twelve-bar aspirations for something darker and more spacious. While inspired by the CURE (and perhaps the English darkwave scene writ large; SISTERS OF MERCY also come to mind), NONTOXIC tried to carve out their own sound and image, away from British imitation, and away from the boots, army belts, and shaved heads of local bands. The fact that the dark, cold, and angry cries of this music found a home in the heavily oppressed GDR comes as little surprise, and while the genre wasn't created in East Berlin, its social landscape of the '80s makes for no better poster child. Fascinating history aside, I do genuinely enjoy all ten tracks on this *Intoxication* LP—maybe wait for a colorless day this fall and brood in the icy synth and guitar, in the deeply rich and sad vocals, in the clamorous shuffle of drum and sludgy bass. Very cool that this music has seen a new release since its inception, given the fact that during that time tape recorders were scarce and the music had little circulation. I'm excited to hear more from this nearly misplaced era.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Aufnahme + Wiedergabe

NYX NEGATIV – Kalrshamns Punks 1981–1984 CD

NYX NEGATIV was a Swedsh hardore punk band who were around from 1981–1986. This compilation starts off with some good chaotic hardcore punk, and then they progress to being a fast hardcore band that seems to get their influence from *This Is Boston Not L.A.* and early JERRY'S KIDS. At the end of this, they are playing slower and with more melody, and then we get a couple of live tracks as well. Most of this album is pure fast hardcore and it's great. It really does have the same type of sound that the very earliest recorded JERRY'S KIDS had—fast as hell and sounding like it could fall apart any second, but all that does is make it sound more punk.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Black Konflik

NÃO – Crime Nuclear EP

HC D-beat with a pinch of flange on the guitar. Tough, steady beats with wailing ghost vocals. The songs rage ahead without tipping into metal or pure noise. A reliably good listen.

Reviewer: Dov Malzberg
Label: Hasiok

MOON PEOPLE – Lunar Secrets cassette

Legend has it that the entire composition of the song "Telstar" came to Joe Meek in a dream. Listening to *Lunar Secrets* begs one to inquire as to the type of nocturnal aquatic fever that may have birthed MOON PEOPLE. Behold the dawn of cosmic surf! May we all bask in the glorious spray of a cascading lunar tide. This six-song cassette will transport your undeserving flesh suit from the depths of a dank synthetic dungeon out into the cold, unrelenting stratosphere. If the VENTURES stole Dick Hyman's Moog and replaced it with a Casio DG-1, these songs may have been programmed into its deepest memory bank. Or if DICK DALE was the king of surf keytar. Fully synthesized and ready to shred the barrel, MOON PEOPLE crush your typical twang and 'verb into eight bits or less. The results are antiquated futuristic instrumental lunacy and it's utterly brilliant.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Swimming Faith

MORAL END – Demonstration cassette

K-town punk's blistering sounds are definitely here—chainsaw guitars with acute sharpened tones, sick-sounding pinched vocals, plus maddening drums with excellent fast cadences that never seem to stop jumping on this record. Suggested tracks: "Black Eye" and "Back Against the Wall" for a pulsating urge to pogo the life out of you. It rings with speedy classic punk rock and hardcore, yet it has a twist of filthy modernity to it. Highly recommended.

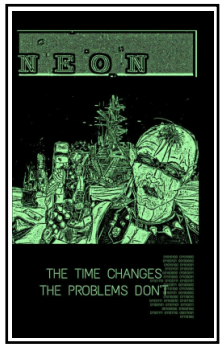
Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Society Suckers

MÈNAGE DÈTROIT – I'm a Fool / Would You Say (I'm in Love) cassette

This Detroit-based guitar-and-drums duo delivers two tracks, "I'm a Fool" and "Would You Say (I'm in Love)," firmly rooted in '60s/garage rock influences. The playing is loose and raw, with a gritty, unpolished energy that fits their sound but the muddy production doesn't do them any favors. Lyrically, the tracks delve into themes of love, loneliness, and heartache, capturing a classic melancholic vibe. If you're into the rough edges of rock, this pair would be right at home opening for any number of bands from the Crypt label from the '90s. I'd love to hear them revved up to eleven, but they're currently at about four.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Painters Tapes

N.E.O.N. – The Time Changes The Problems Don't cassette



Third cassette release by this Jacksonville, Florida-based solo project. N.E.O.N (NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF NASCAR) is some sort of goofball amalgamation of harsh noise and synth punk that is incredibly heavy on the industrial music interludes. It actually starts out with a pretty straightforward SCREAMERS-type song that has an industrial drum beat behind it, but devolves into complete madness before the song even ends. The cassette kind of continues getting more confusing and unhinged as it proceeds from there. As a bit of an outsider to the whole industrial world, this project comes across rather perplexing to me. Most of the songs on this N.E.O.N cassette feel like an unfinished, less memorable version of NINE INCH NAILS, who I have never fully understood to begin with.

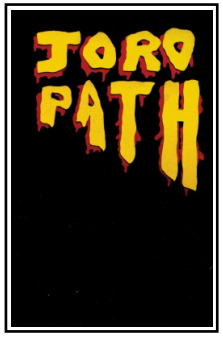
Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Bellicose

NERVERNA – Hållplats Norr LP

Swedish band that mixes post-punk and post-hardcore, all wrapped in warm synth tones. While the band does an admirable job of crafting distorted bass-heavy dirges, the vocalist steals the shows here with exasperated hollers that drip with desperation and exhaustion. The cumulative effect is moving. The busy synths sounded a little heavy-handed at first, since they are clean tones gleaming through an otherwise noisy mix, but I grew to like the counterpoint between the crawling din and the sparkling keys. Heavy and emotive release that is worth checking out.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Nejförfan

JORO PATH – Golden Lines cassette



I'm absolutely smitten with this release. Hardcore rock'n'roll fronted by a rabid King Kong recorded directly to tape. Well, at least it sounds like it was recorded directly to tape. The production for this EP is perfect. Gritty, raw, and messy as hell, the audio peaking at the correct times, leaving the drums sounding as if they've come through a twisted black hole. Four insane songs clocking in at nearly five minutes; this is one of those EPs where the entire thing is parked on only one track. No need to cut them up anyways, you're gonna wanna hear it through from start to finish each time.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Total Recall

JUVENTUD PODRIDA – Control/Encierro EP

Damn, I had no idea that this Panama-based band was still going. I was aware that the singer had found employment in HEZ, but naively thought that JUVENTUD PODRIDA had retired. The band released some solid records in the first half of the 2010s, notably the *1989* EP in 2012 that put them on the map. Good on them for not giving up and continuing to fly the raw hardcore punk flag at home. *Control/Encierro* is classically executed and well coherent with the Discos Enfermos catalog. Mean and fast Scandi-style *rabiozo* hardcore punk with direct and snotty vocals in Spanish and fuzzed-out distortion on the guitar but, even without taking the vocals into account, it does sound like a non-Swedish band having a go at the genre (the band must have carefully played some crusty Japanese records from Osaka). The production is very energetic and certainly packs a punch. In theory, the vocals, very reminiscent of traditional old school "hardcore *en Español*" in terms of singing style, should not totally fit with this distorted käng hardcore sound, but they actually do, and it brings a different vibe altogether. I was going to say "fresh," but that'd be a bit far-fetched. A strong comeback, and I can imagine JUVENTUD PODRIDA to be crushing live.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: A-Z / Discos Enfermos / Diy Kontraatak

K.O. QUEEN – 1 K.O. Queen cassette

Hardcore/screamo band that feels like they're going to rip out your hair (in a great way). I was hooked when "Shrcc Attcc" started, and the raw, guttural sounds began. For me, it was a silly and hectic experience in the best way; the vocals were so goofy, crazy, all different pitches, that I swear only a dog could hear them. The track "Luv Bug" felt a bit out of place as it was acoustic with a banjo, unlike all the other tracks, but then the tape did return to its typical hardcore nature. Not entirely sure if I'm sold on that track or not, but all the others were a 10/10 for me.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: XTRO

KILLER KIN – Point Blank / Mr. Dynamite 7″

It's okay, I guess. I had a big yawn at the end of it. They have energy, I'll give them that, but it's all kind of weighed down by a shitty performance and overly glossy production. I'd probably be able to get more into this STOOGES-meets-MOTORHEAD sound if it had the grit of a punk band rather than the washed-out muck it serves up. The drums and everything about it just sound weak to me. Wake me up when this boring wave of punk is over.

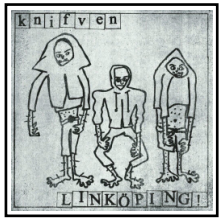
Reviewer: Neal Ray
Label: Wap Shoo Wap

KILLSEDUCTION – Demo 2023 CD

We got riffs on this one! Three quick thrash metal tracks with an *...And Justice for All*-style medieval intro from this Japanese band. The production is super clean, and the playing is impeccable, riding the finest crossover line between straight thrash and hardcore. Blastbeats abound, and the rapid-fire spoken vocals make this premium fodder for classic Big Four fans as well as SUICIDAL TENDENCIES devotees. Cool CD.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Hardcore Kitchen

KNIFVEN – Linköping! LP



A splash of springy Swedish punk. I don't want to stereotype here, but Sweden has a knack for producing very catchy punk. Of course, other countries have bands with grabby riffs and pop sensibilities, but I just think of Swedish punk as imbued with this stuff right out of the gate, regardless of genre. I mean, several of these songs played in a loop in my head, and this is fairly boilerplate hardcore. All the same, its edges remain agreeably rough and slamdance-ready.

Reviewer: Dov Malzberg
Label: Lövely

KNIVES – What We See in Their Eyes LP

Dual female and male vocals with a big post-punk influence. That is not all this is, though: I hear a wide range from bouncy punk to hardcore and even some metallic guitar riffs. Make no mistake though; this isn't metal, this is closer to post-punk than anything else. Great vibe on the dual vocals with the bass and drums hammering out a punishing, bouncy punk beat, and the guitar is working with everything else despite the fact that it is in contrast to everything else most of the time. In some ways, it reminds me of the TYRADES mixed with a very popular duo from England who play a laptop and sing. This was a really good listen and very interesting—I listened to this four times and every time I heard different things, so I will be listening to this again.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Hound Gawd!

L.A. DRUGZ – Outside Place LP reissue

Guessing that since this is the tenth anniversary edition that I missed this when it came out ten years ago. Six cuts of driving, melodic punk rock meets power pop is the kind of thing I can get behind. Mid-tempo and super catchy, this is easy to like. It's nicely produced, which results in the vocals not getting buried down below. I'm really reminded of BAD SPORTS in the end, which is not at all a bad thing. The only real negative here is that it took me ten years to find it.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Hovercraft

LEJONEN – Lejonen 12″

Leonine supergroup LEJONEN with a debut 12" here. Made up of various bods from other notable bands such as OXLEY'S MIDNIGHT RUNNERS, VICIOUS RUMOURS, FATSKINS, et al, you do end up asking the question "why did they bother?" It's too polished, it's not memorable in the slightest, and with lyrics bemoaning "kids these days" and the Vietnam war, it basically feels like the reactionary middle-aged ramblings of a father at a divorce hearing set to GarageBand presets. Not to mention pretending to be a medieval warrior is just about tolerable when the TEMPLARS do it, but here it has the same cognitive dissonance of seeing someone from Wigan wearing a cowboy hat.

Reviewer: Ben Marshall
Label: Vuk Media

LIQUID LUNCH – Road King cassette

Hyperactive egg-punk that brings to mind PRISON AFFAIR after one too many vodka Red Bulls. Powerful, screeching vocals paired with scorching guitar licks and the occasional synth lead. As is the case with most of these egg bands, there's a lot of DEVO influence here, but there are moments that have a '90s Fat Wreck vibe to them, too. Elements of bands like GOOBER PATROL shine through at points—helps differentiate LIQUID LUNCH from the other legion of nerds out there making this kind of music. Good stuff here, and well worth checking out if you're a fellow egghead.

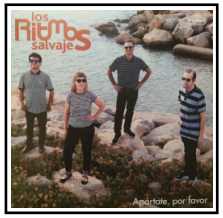
Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: XTRO

LITIGE – 2 Degrés EP

This EP is some really great melodic punk. I also hear some late '70s early '80s French power pop and new wave. Whatever you want to call it, this record makes me want to tap my toes and get up and dance. At times, the music can almost be called hardcore-influenced in the choruses of a couple of songs, reminiscent of the DILS or WEIRDOS, before settling back into some new wave power pop, something like the band LES CALAMITÉS. I want to hear more from this band.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Echo Canyon

LOS RITMOS SALVAJES – Apártate, Por Favor EP



This is modern garage rock/punk from Spain. The vocals are very melodic and sound great with the distorted guitar. The song arrangements seem to show that they can write traditional garage rock songs, and this is a nice change of pace for me. If garage rock is what you like, I think you will like this one!

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Discos Polo / Espora / Raca / Runaway

MAD PARADE – Re-Launch CD

Foregoing the fashion of the era, old school act MAD PARADE opted to play first-wave-inspired music in Fullerton at the dawn of hardcore! While fast and punchy So-Cal bands like the CIRCLE JERKS were on the come-up, these rebels had a sound along the lines of ANGELIC UPSTARTS or COCKSPARRER—a rocking and poppy kind of punk with sing-along choruses and a commercial sensibility. Compiling the group's 1987 full-length debut *A Thousand Words* (their best stuff, in my opinion) and the career-spanning *History 1982–2017* anthology, this CD has all the MAD PARADE you can handle. Recommended for fans of 999, GENERATION X, and the like.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Gutterwail

MALA VISTA – Fun-Time LP

It's hard to even care about this band. It's mind-numbingly basic, and not in a good way. It uses tired punk rock clichés until it's dried up. I'll give it this though, "Juana La Cubana" is pretty good. It has a nice groove and chorus going for it. Aside from that, I can't really give this LP that many props. It was so boring the first time I listened through it that I practically forgot it even existed until I had to revisit it for this review. It's not intolerable, it's just quite dull and boring to my ears.

Reviewer: Neal Ray
Label: Spaghetty Town

MANIC SPLITS – Manic Splits cassette

Driving rock'n'roll-infused garage punk from somewhere in Ohio. MANIC SPLITS do a damn good job of keeping my attention throughout their nine-song cassette, despite them having a song over five minutes long which delves into some real out-there psychedelia. Nothing here is reinventing the wheel, but they are able to incorporate many different aspects of punk, garage rock, surf, rock'n'roll, etc. without feeling insincere. Through it all, the vocalist lackadaisically barks his words in some COUNTRY TEASERS-type of delivery. I considered making a vocal comparison to VIAGRA BOYS, but for once, making the COUNTRY TEASERS reference seemed like the less offensive choice.

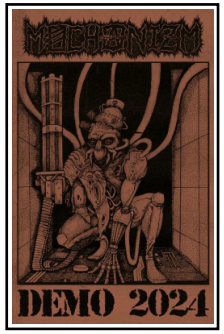
Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Clean Demon

MANTAROCHEN – In the Badgers Cave EP

MANTAROCHEN is a darkwave, gothic post-punk band from Germany. I was immediately drawn to their EP solely from the title—*In the Badgers Cave*, so badass. With the opening track, "Reflection," you feel as though you're in another world. Perhaps underwater, swirling in the moody abyss they've created. Reminiscent of SELOFAN with distinct bass lines and synths, they are able to create an atmosphere of unrest, leaving you with a haunted feeling. I loved how lost I got in this EP.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: It's Eleven

MECHANIZM – Demo 2024 cassette



Metallic forms of hardcore punk and a pinch of powerviolence are combined in this demo released in June. Vocals are draggy and desperate with traces of reverb and distortion probably by compression. Music is mid-paced in almost every track, with a repetitive yet sufficient formula regarding guitar and drums. Bass lines excel but are constantly missing in the mix. Good first effort, but still lacking determination and definition in some respects.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Delayed Gratification